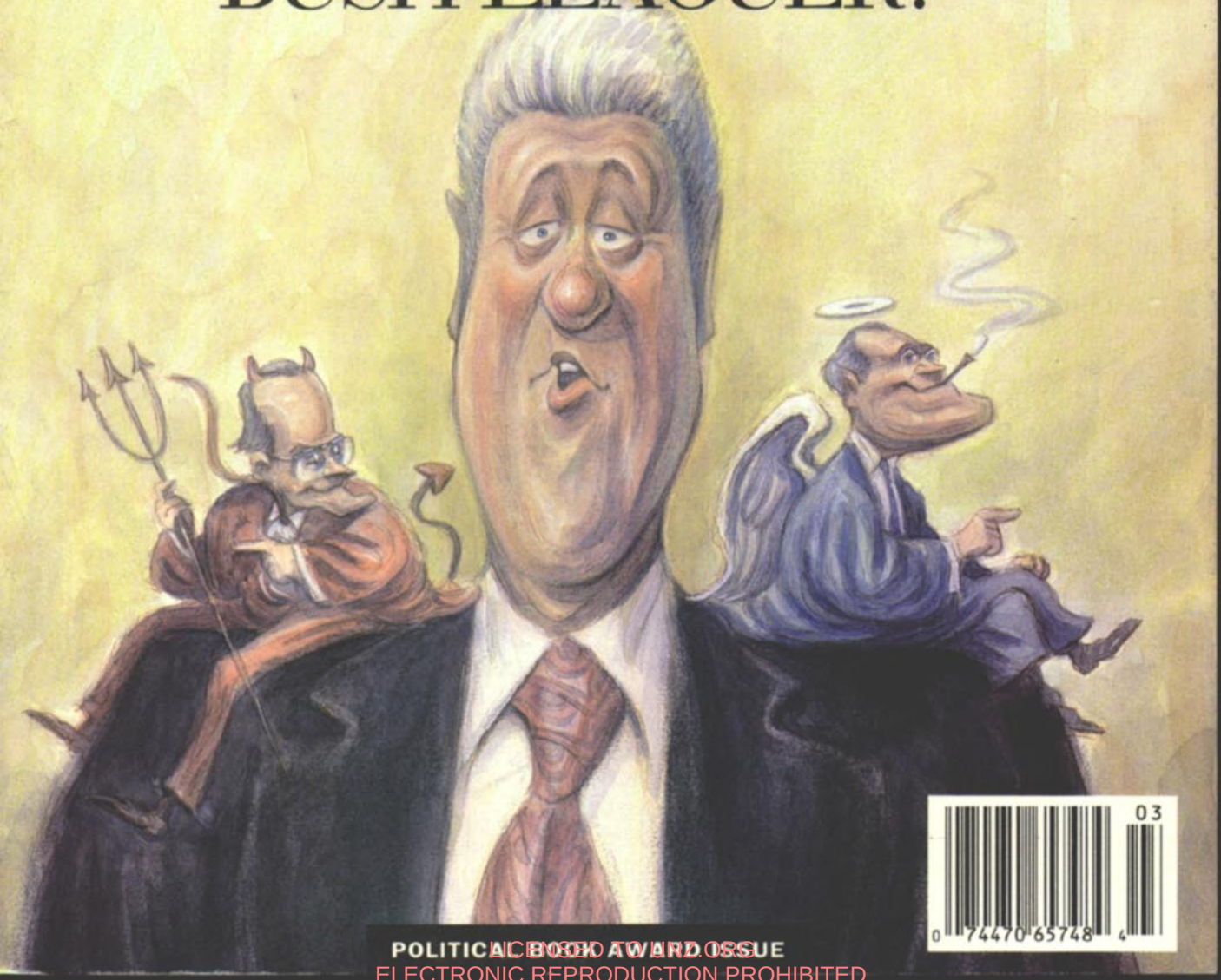
The Washington Monthly

MARCH 1993/$3.50

- Nicholas Lemann on Kevin Phillips
- Admiral William J. Crowe: Why your congressman bothered me
- What Clinton could learn from the catastrophic health care catastrophe

A NEW FDR OR ANOTHER BUSH LEAGUER?



POLITICAL BOSS AWARD ISSUE

ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY FUND

41 East 70th Street, New York, New York 10021 ▲ (212) 535-4441

A NEW SERIES FROM THE TWENTIETH CENTURY FUND

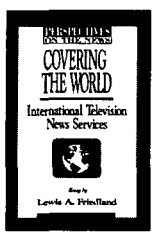
PERSPECTIVES ON THE NEWS

Essays by major journalists and academics focusing on current issues facing the press.

Recently Released:

The New News v. The Old News: The Press and Politics in the 1990s
Essays by
Jay Rosen and
Paul Taylor

Covering the World: International Television News Services
Essay by
Lewis A. Friedland



FORTHCOMING

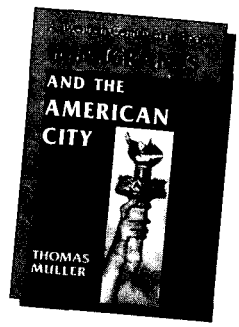
Frank Denton and Howard Kurtz on the future of newspapers

Barbara Dill and Martin London on privacy and libel litigation

Series and TCF Press papers are distributed by:
The Brookings Institution, Book Order Dept.
P.O. Box 029, Washington, D.C. 20042
Telephone: 1 (800) 275-1447
Fax # (202) 797-6004
The New News v. The Old News
ISBN 0-87078-344-0 $9.95
Covering the World
ISBN 0-87078-345-9 $8.95
Plus shipping and handling

IMMIGRANTS AND THE AMERICAN CITY

A Twentieth Century Fund Book
by Thomas Muller. Published by
New York University Press.



"Thomas Muller has written an important, well-researched and thoughtful book on one of the key issues on the American agenda. . . . No one will be able to talk about these topics in the future without taking account of this book."

—Nathan Glazer, Harvard University

INTEGRATION WITH MEXICO
OPTIONS FOR U.S. POLICY

A Twentieth Century Fund Paper
by Robert A. Pastor. Published by
The Twentieth Century Fund Press.

NAFTA, recently signed by the leaders of Canada, Mexico, and the United States, now awaits ratification by these countries' legislatures. Robert Pastor argues that the marketplace alone cannot be trusted to solve our problems and proposes ways to help policymakers manage this critical period in U.S.-Mexican relations.

FORTHCOMING

DEADLOCK OR DECISION: THE U.S. SENATE AND THE RISE OF NATIONAL POLITICS
by Fred R. Harris, to be published by Oxford University Press.

BEYOND THE WALL: GERMANY'S ROAD TO UNIFICATION
by Elizabeth Pond, to be published by The Brookings Institution.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Washington Monthly

Volume Twenty-Five, Number Three March 1993

Tilting at Windmills
by Charles Peters
Bill and Hillary's Sidwell friends . . . on the road with Dan Quayle . . . what Clinton can learn from FDR . . . and other odds and ends. . . . 6

Heavy Medals
by David Segal
There are hundreds of journalism prizes out there and you may already be a winner. 12

Fax and Spend
by Clifford Adelman
Why you should hate my new computer. 18

War Games
by Admiral William J. Crowe Jr.
Why Congress is a threat to Defense. 21

Original Spin
by Jack Hitt
Sex and hype, not Amerigo's mapmaking, christened our continent. 25

Voting Wrongs
by Jon Meacham
How Republicans exploited race in redistricting. 28

Beat the Press
by Leslie Kaufman
Some AIDS activists have bullied editors and publishers into silencing reporters. 35

THE NEW FDR OR ANOTHER BUSH LEAGUER?
Turning campaign promise into presidential performance

What Clinton Could Learn from the Catastrophic Health Care Catastrophe
by Greg Monfils
In the debris of a failed bill, some pivotal pointers for making national health care happen. 39

Debt 101
by John Heilemann
Student loans now make low-paying, meaningful work impossible. Here's how to fix them. 42

Sign It, Then Mind It
by Christopher Georges
Until Washington tends to the details, good ideas—even Clinton's—will keep flopping. 45

ON POLITICAL BOOKS

Thinking in Moderation
by John J. DiIulio Jr.
Clinton's favorite think tank borrows a little from everyone. 51

Middle Class Hero
by Nicholas Lemann
Kevin Phillips knows what ails the middle class, but not how to cure it. 54

A Tale of Two Elections
by Polly Toynbee
Britain's Labour party has taken heart from Clinton's victory. It shouldn't. 57

Political Booknotes
Reviews by **Daniel Gross** and **Brendan Foley**. 59

LETTERS 2
WHO'S WHO 32
MONTHLY JOURNALISM AWARDS 23
POLITICAL BOOK AWARDS 34
POLITICAL PUZZLE 20
TIDBITS AND OUTRAGES 17
MEMO OF THE MONTH 24

Cover illustration by Brian Ajhar

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LETTERS

Brideshead defended

As David Segal's Trinidadian contemporary at Oxford (Balliol, 1986-89), I have no stake in the Anglo-American squabble in which he seems so interested ["Bill and Friends' Excellent Adventure," December 1992]. Since, however, I've recently completed a graduate degree at Harvard Law School, I have a basis for comparison and find Segal's piece more jingoistic than informative.

Oxford's tutorial system provides a rare opportunity to deal "one-on-one" with potentially engaging teachers and certainly compares favorably with that self-abasing ritual of American graduate school life—the cultivation of a "mentor." The fact that individual dons at Oxford may be delinquent tutors pales in comparison with (for instance) Harvard's systematic displacement of recognized authorities by all manner of "teaching assistants."

The American system's "constant grading" which supposedly "keeps minds focused" actually degenerates at Harvard Law School into a facile exercise in regurgitating hastily digested outlines. A Harvard classmate was asked by a curious fellow-passenger on a flight to Boston what law school she attended. She answered, "Emmanuel Law School"—a mischievous reference to the series of outlines universally relied upon by Harvard Law students faced with imminent exams. The passenger disembarked oblivious. Segal seems equally so.

RONALD ROBERTS
New York, New York

Vice squad

"Split Decision" [Akhil Reed Amar and Vik Amar, November 1992] is full of elementary errors. For example, in the 1836 case of Richard Johnson, when the electoral college did not produce a vice-president, the issue went to the Senate, not the House. Also, contrary to the authors' assertion, a bare majority, 26 of the 50 states, purport, one way or another, to bind electors. If one includes, as some commentators do, those states which simply have a lever to pull for the Democratic or Republican candidates for president and vice president instead of for individual electors, in at least 24 states voters might be able to do what the authors argue for. Even in the 26 states that purport in some way or another to bind the electors, there are serious questions about enforceability, both in state and federal courts.

WILLIAM JOSEPHSON
New York, New York

The authors reply:

Josephson is right on one point: Richard Johnson was chosen by the Senate, not the House.

But this detail is tangential to our analysis, and the rest of Josephson's assumptions and assertions—going to the heart of our article—miss the mark. None of the 50 states counts popular votes in a way that would give full effect to voters' preferences for a split ticket. Assume, for example, that in 1988, a state's citizens had voted as follows: 40 percent Bush/Quayle, 30 percent Dukakis/Bentsen, 30 percent Bush/Bentsen. Under the laws and practices of each state, its vice–presidential electoral votes would have gone to Quayle, even though 60 percent of the citizens voted for Bentsen over Quayle. Each state counts votes for tickets, not votes for candidates.

On the issues of compatibility, succession, and (now rare) Senate tie-breaking, we remind Josephson that many states sensibly allow ticket-splitting between governor and lieutenant governor. And the biggest consequence of our proposed system would be to increase compatibility between a president and vice president whenever voters chose a straight party ticket; our system eliminates current incentives to "balance" a ticket with candidates representing a party's different wings.

Back track

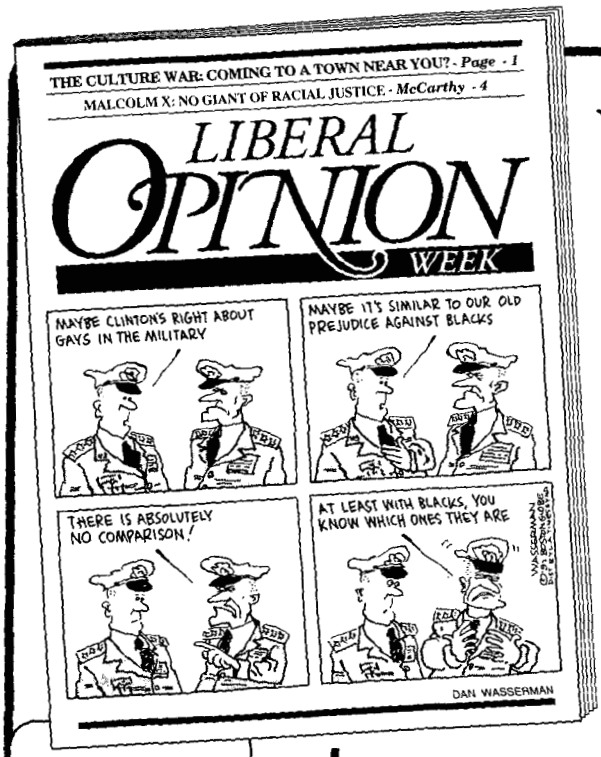
I must respond to Patricia Kean's "Blowing Up the Tracks" [January/February]. Her assertion that "enforced homogeneity benefits no one" is both blatantly untrue and totally unsupported by the research on tracking.

Our society has no problem acknowledging that some people are musically or athletically gifted while others are so tone-deaf or uncoordinated that no amount of instruction will let them play for a world-class orchestra or in the major leagues. Why do we persist in denying that intelligence, too, runs on a continuum from profoundly retarded to profoundly gifted?

Despite widely publicized assertions to the contrary, the preponderance of research-based evidence has not shown that grouping harms students academically or hurts the self-esteem of those in the low track. Chen-Lin Kulik's 1985 study found that low-ability students do just as well academically whether or not they are grouped. The inescapable conclusion is that heterogeneous control classes were geared to the low-ability students. Heterogeneous classes will further "dumb down" American education. We are so far behind as a nation that we cannot afford this.

Of course, no one deserves a second-class education, and no one defends the terrible inequities found in tracked systems. But the solution is to fix what we're doing wrong without throwing out what we do right.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Will It Be as Good for You as It Was for Him?

Watch Clinton perform on sex issues.

Follow the debate on:

- gays in the military
- abortion counseling
- removing HIV infection as a bar to immigration
- fetal tissue transplants
- lifting the RU-486 ban
- AIDS research

Only ONE publication can give you this many liberal columnists and cartoonists every week—52 weeks a year!

FEATURED COLUMNISTS

EVERY COLUMN, EVERY WORD

Mary McGrory, Richard Cohen
Jesse Jackson, Calvin Trillin
David Broder, Coretta Scott King
Ralph Nader, Ellen Goodman
Linda Ellerbee, Mark Russell
David Nyhan, Michael Kinsley
Neal Peirce, Lars-Erik Nelson
Art Buchwald, Russell Baker
Nat Hentoff, Clarence Page
Dave Barry, Anna Quindlen
Cynthia Tucker

CONTRIBUTING COLUMNISTS

SELECTED COLUMNS WEEKLY, IN FULL

Molly Ivins, Les Payne
Andy Rooney, James Hoagland
Colman McCarthy, Robert Reno
Anthony Lewis, Mike Royko
Christopher Matthews
Carl Rowan, Germond & Witcover
Murray Kempton, William Raspberry
William Schneider, Hobart Rowen
William Pfaff, Jimmy Breslin
Jack Anderson & Michael Binstein

CONTRIBUTING CARTOONISTS

Jules Feiffer, 'Herblock'
Duane Powell, Mark Stamaty
Tom Toles, Dan Wasserman
Jeff Danziger, Steve Sack
Paul Conrad, Mike Lane
Bill Schorr, Rob Rogers
Doug Marlette, Jim Borgman
Mike Luckovich, Mike Peters
Taylor Jones

Look to ***Liberal Opinion Week*** to bring you nearly all of America's most influential liberal columnists—the pundits who will play a major role in shaping the course of the new national agenda.

In a single publication, you can follow every column, every word, of such perceptive writers as Mary McGrory, David Nyhan, David Broder, Lars-Erik Nelson, Linda Ellerbee, Michael Kinsley, Richard Cohen and Ellen Goodman.

You can also enjoy a look at the lighter side with such humorists as Dave Barry, Art Buchwald, Mark Russell, Mike Royko, Calvin Trillin and Russell Baker.

In all, ***Liberal Opinion Week*** brings you some 40 of America's finest syndicated newspaper columnists. You won't want to miss their observations and assessments.

Plus, from the drawing board you will find our lineup of editorial cartoonists including Jules Feiffer, Mark Stamaty, Tom Toles, Dan Wasserman, Jim Borgman, Mike Luckovich, 'Herblock,' Mike Peters, Paul Conrad and a host of others.

Stay informed with ***Liberal Opinion Week,*** a 32-page tabloid with no advertising.

If you are not completely satisfied, we will return a full refund on all unmailed copies at any time, for any reason.

Introductory Offer – 13 Weekly Issues for $9.75

Not available on newsstands.

TO ORDER, RETURN COUPON OR CALL **1-800-338-9335**

LIBERAL OPINION WEEK

P.O. BOX 468 VINTON, IA 52349

☐ YES: Send a 13-week introductory subscription for $9.75
☐ Send a 1-year subscription (52 weekly issues) for $39.00

Name _____
Address _____
_____ Apt. _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____

☐ Check enclosed
☐ Bill me ☐ VISA ☐ MC
Card # _____
Exp. _____

(Foreign postage add $25.00, $6.50 for 13-week offer.)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Kean noted that parents of high-achieving students will fight untracking "to the death." I'm one of those fighters, so let me explain our motives. You have to imagine what it must be like to be a gifted child in a heterogeneous class: to be the smartest kid there, to know nearly everything before it is taught, to spend most of the day endlessly practicing what you already know. It can make you cocky. It can leave you with absolutely no study skills. It can make you bored and frustrated and rebellious. As parents, we see our kids' personalities distorted by that experience. People who think gifted education will make kids' heads swell don't realize that the opposite is true: only contact with other gifted kids will put their talents into perspective.

MARTHA WRIGHT TOTH
Belleville, Mississippi

The author replies:

Untracking is not an issue that fits neatly under the PC heading where Toth would place it. In fact, conservatives and liberals alike realize that our schools are failing a large majority of their students.

Neither do proponents of untracking deny that some people are smarter and/or more motivated than others. What they propose is that all kids be challenged to the best of their abilities and that they have a chance to decide their academic fates rather than have standardized test scores predetermine them.

I haven't seen the 1985 study cited by Toth, but the conclusion she draws—that they drag everyone else down—seems far from "inescapable" since she hasn't cited evidence that says the higher-achieving children were harmed by such a heterogeneous group.

However, her statement that "the preponderance of research-based evidence has not shown that grouping harms (low track) students academically" is itself untrue. As my article states, the vast majority of current research proves precisely the opposite.

Finally, I taught a mixed group of students for several years in a politically incorrect Catholic school. If Toth foresees dire consequences for talented children in heterogeneous classrooms, I can only say that my honor students bore little resemblance to the bored, frustrated, cocky, rebellious monsters she describes. They got competition in spades, and perhaps most important of all, realized that they did not know everything before it was taught. That's a valuable lesson for anyone.

Uxorial comeuppance

Many thanks for Walter Pincus's illuminating article on Elliott Abrams. Pincus has given me faith in my judgement of human nature. In the few times that I observed Abrams in TV appearances, he always struck me as arrogant, jejune, and the very archetypal ambitious sycophant that the Reagan-Bush regime foisted upon the American public. Abrams has exactly the wife he deserves.

ROBERT PIERCE
Essex, Connecticut

Say you're sorry

"Who's Who" [January/February] contained a slimy little piece claiming that suspicions "have been, um, aroused" about Bill Clinton and Laura Tyson of the Council of Economic Advisers. That kind of smirking innuendo belongs in the gutter press, and not in the *Monthly*. From you and the *Monthly* we expect better. You owe, we think, President Clinton, Tyson, and your readers an apology.

ROBERT AND CAROLYN BECKER
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

The editor's reply:

See this month's Who's Who.

The Washington Monthly

Editor in Chief Charles Peters.
Publisher Mary T. Beiro.
Editors Christopher Georges, Jon Meacham, David Segal.
Contributing Editors Jonathan Alter, Thomas N. Bethell, Tom Bethell, Taylor Branch, Matthew Cooper, Gregg Easterbrook, James Fallows, Paul Glastris, Mickey Kaus, Phil Keisling, Michael Kinsley, Nicholas Lemann, Suzannah Lessard, Arthur Levine, Timothy Noah, Joseph Nocera, Leonard Reed, John Rothchild, Jonathan Rowe, Walter Shapiro, Scott Shuger, Steven Waldman.
Editorial Advisory Board Graham Allison, James David Barber, Edgar Cahn, David Halberstam, Murray Kempton, Richard Reeves, Hugh Sidey.
Production Manager/Art Director Elliott Beard, Sridhar Tallapragada.
Assistant to the Editor Pam Matthews.
Graphics Consultant Christine Solomon.
Interns Mike Bach, Marion Davis, Rebecca Evans, Ann O'Hanlon, Asha Karkhanis, David Smyth, Jon Zebrowski.
Proofers Gladys Banta, Joan Dine, John Kalajian, Linda McIntyre, Mary Mewborn, Jack Shellenberger, Nina Teicholz.

Subscription rates: U.S. and possessions: one year, $35; two years, $66; three years, $92. For Canadian and foreign subscriptions, add $7 for surface delivery; air mail delivery add $32. Back issues, $4.50. Send correspondence concerning subscriptions, undelivered copies, and changes of address to Box 587, Mount Morris IL, 61054. For change of address, please provide six weeks' notice and include old address label. *The Washington Monthly* is indexed in the Book Review Index, Political Science Abstracts, Public Affairs Information Service, the Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, the Social Science Index, and Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory and may be obtained on microfilm from University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Reprints of articles are available to individuals or schools at $1.50 each (prepaid). For reprint rights for all or part of an article call S. Tallapragada at (202) 462-0128. Published monthly except combined July/August and January/February issues by The Washington Monthly Company, 1611 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20009 (202) 462-0128.

© 1993 The Washington Monthly Co. All rights reserved. Reproduction by any method whatsoever without permission is prohibited.

ISSN 0043-0633. Postmaster: Send change of address to *The Washington Monthly*, Box 587, Mount Morris IL, 61054. Second class postage paid at Mechanicsburg, PA. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Correction:

An item in January/February "Tilting at Windmills" misidentified the city in which a police official had used racial slurs. The correct location is Peoria, Arizona.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEW FROM

GPG GREENWOOD PUBLISHING GROUP INC.

Cruise Missile Proliferation in the 1990s

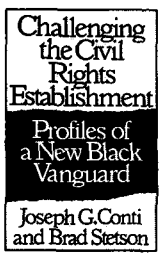
By W. Seth Carus

Foreword by Janne E. Nolan Published with the Center for Strategic and International Studies Washington, D.C.

"Everyone is aware of the horror of ballistic missiles employed by Iraq during the 1991 Gulf War, but few are aware of the accurate and far more devastating attacks on Iraqi military targets caused by U.S. cruise missiles. Carus now provides us with the compelling logic and data to understand why such missiles well may become the long-reach weapons of choice in regional conflicts."

—James G. Roche

Praeger Publishers. 1992. 184 pages.
0-275-94519-7. $37.95
Also available in paperback: 0-275-94520-0. $14.95



Challenging the Civil Rights Establishment

Profiles of a New Black Vanguard

By Joseph G. Conti and Brad Stetson

"The politically incorrect voices lucidly represented in this book are an essential antidote to the monolithic civil rights establishment."

—Dinesh D'Souza
Author of Illiberal Education
Research Fellow, American Enterprise Institute

"Eat your heart out, Jesse Jackson! Conti and Stetson clearly portray members of 'the New Black Vanguard' who are gaining stature not because reporters rhapsodize over their rhetoric, but because their programs and ideas work!"

—Marvin Olasky
Professor of Journalism
University of Texas, Austin
Senior Fellow, Capital Research Center

Praeger Trade. 1993. 264 pages. 0-275-94460-3. $22.95

Complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act

A Guidebook for Management and People with Disabilities

By Don Fersh and Peter W. Thomas, Esq.
Foreword by Senator J. Robert Kerrey

"This guidebook on the Americans with Disabilities Act bridges the gap between the Act itself and the implementation of the Act. It breathes life into the words of the law . . . If there is one essential resource about the ADA that belongs on all our desks, this is the one."

—Bernard Posner
Former Executive Director,
President's Committee
on Employment of People with Disabilities

Quorum Books. 1993. 280 pages. 0-89930-714-0. $49.95

Secret Science

Federal Control of American Science and Technology

By Herbert N. Foerstel

This book is a plea for scientific openness and free access to information. It demonstrates the futility of scientific secrecy and the weakness of national arguments against open communication. From the restriction of technologically advanced exports, to the classification of research as restricted or secret to the monitoring (and censoring) of scientific publications and library collections, to the pre-emption by the Pentagon of scientific and technological research, the U.S. government has achieved a state of unprecedented control over American science and technology, despite the end of the Cold War.

Praeger Trade. 1993. 256 pages. 0-275-94447-6. $24.95

An American Paradox

Censorship in a Nation of Free Speech

By Patrick Garry

Although America is probably the most free and tolerant nation on earth, censorship continues to flourish and increase in the arts, music, television, and advertising, and even in universities. Garry defines censorship in America across the years, analyzes its root causes, examines traditional battles and new ones, and describes serious new forms of censorship.

Praeger Trade. 1993. 200 pages. 0-275-94522-7. $22.95

ORDER TOLL-FREE, 24 HOURS-A-DAY: 1-800-225-5800
Please call us for a free catalog at (203) 226-3571

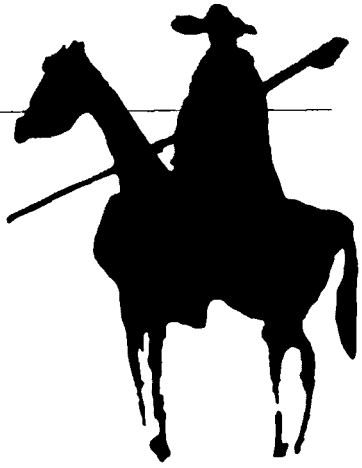
Q

PRAEGER PUBLISHERS • QUORUM BOOKS
Imprints GREENWOOD PUBLISING GROUP, INC.
88 Post Road West, Box 5007, Westport, CT 06881-5007
(203) 226-3571 • FAX (203) 222-1502

AD93

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TILTING AT WINDMILLS



I have a proposal for all those talk show hosts around the country. Why not get the voters to write their congressmen demanding that Members give up their own generous health insurance programs until the rest of us enjoy similar protection from the fear of illness and disability? Why should they be protected while their fellow citizens aren't? Why would they have any sense of urgency about helping us until they are in the same boat? I urge you to ask your congressman these questions the next time you see him. And if you don't expect to see him soon, write a letter now. . . .

According to *Roll Call*, Congress provides 11,000 free parking spaces for its employees. In the entire city of Washington, there are only 16,000 metered parking places for the rest of us. The average citizen may have the right to petition his government for the relief of grievances, but he's practically certain to get a ticket while doing so. . . .

A few facts about the District of Columbia's public school system. In 1979, there were 113,900 students in the system and 511 bureaucrats in the central office. By 1991 the number of students had dropped to 83,000, but the number of central office bureaucrats had increased to 1,037. Ninety percent of the District's 6,000 teachers are rated "very good" or "excellent" and only one half of 1 percent are rated less than satisfactory under the D.C. system's present method of evaluation. No one in his right mind believes the teachers are that good. Unfortunately, the phony ratings protect the incompetent from being fired and guarantee raises for even the most marginal. . . .

The other night Al Hunt, Washington bureau chief of *The Wall Street Journal*, and his wife, PBS's Judy Woodruff, entertained three powerful members of Clinton's economic team: Roger Altman, deputy Treasury secretary, Robert Rubin, head of the National Economic Council, and Laura Tyson, chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers. When Howard Kurtz of *The Washington Post* asked about the party, Hunt answered, "Are we trying to suck up to the Clinton administration? We used to have people over from the Bush administration—Marlin Fitzwater, Michael Boskin, once even Jim Baker." Al is a splendid fellow, but his logic escapes me in this case. It sounds to me like he's saying, "Well, we sucked up to the Republicans, too, when they were in power."

Hunt and Woodruff have children who attend Sidwell Friends, and he and NBC's Tim Russert were recently joking on television about how Al and Judy could run into Bill and Hillary at Sidwell PTA meetings.

This helps explain the lack of criticism from the Washington press about the Clintons' decision to send Chelsea to a private school. Almost all the Washington elite, including the press elite, do the same. Eleanor Clift is a notable exception. She sends her child to Wilson, which Chelsea could have attended after a year at Alice Deal if the Clintons had chosen the public school route.

My complaint against the Clintons is that they did not even look at Deal or Wilson, meaning they never seriously considered

DO WE PASS OR FAIL?

TESTING TESTING

Social Consequences of the Examined Life

by F. Allan Hanson

"An impressive, well-written book ...does a fine job of showing testing in a new light." —Michael Agar, author of *The Professional Stranger*

"Well thought out and well expressed....Hanson has seen the common thread that runs through a variety of testing procedures." —Howard Becker, author of *Art Worlds*

$28.00 at bookstores order 1-800-822-6657.

University of California Press

Berkeley
Los Angeles
New York
London

1893 100 1993

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the public choice. If they had done so, they would have discovered that both schools are reasonably good. The District school system is obviously lying when it claims that 90 percent of its teachers are either "very good" or "excellent"—maybe 30 percent really rate that high. But a good number of them are on the faculties of Deal and Wilson, making these schools superior to most others in the District.

As Deborah Fallows predicted in our December issue, the Clintons' choice of a private school has been seized by conservatives as evidence of Clinton's hypocrisy in opposing vouchers that would give the average man a similar choice.

Clinton demonstrated the same kind of hypocrisy when he appointed Zoë Baird as attorney general despite her having hired illegal immigrants for whom she did not pay Social Security taxes. This is another common practice among the elite. So again, journalists were slow to see the problem. On Friday, January 15, a *Washington Post* headline proclaimed, "Baird's Hiring Disclosure Not Seen as a Major Block." The next night only one of the five panelists on CNN's "The Capital Gang" foresaw any trouble for Baird. But the public outcry which the press had failed to anticipate was so strong that the nomination had to be withdrawn the following Friday, January 22. . . .

Corporate reformers long ago learned that bureaucratic "layering" should be one of their main targets as they saw organizations being paralyzed because decisions were postponed indefinitely by deputy special assistants and other superfluous officials. That this light has not dawned on the federal governmen is suggested by the fact that the number of layers subject to presidential appointment has increased from six in John Kennedy's era to 15 today. . . .

Although I generally believe in reducing the size of the federal bureaucracy, some agencies need more people, not less. An example is the Office of Management and Budget, which is supposed to oversee the entire federal bureaucracy with fewer than 200 budget examiners out of OMB's 550 total employees. That's not nearly enough people to do the job. We need to double or even triple the examiner staff so that there are enough people to find out what is really going on in the government. Bill Clinton, as a former governor of a small state, may think he can find out for himself—after all, he used to keep an eye on everything just by walking through downtown Little Rock or visiting a few county seats and hearing what his constituents told him as they chatted on the streets. This, as Jimmy Carter discovered much too late, doesn't work in Washington, where vast forces work to insulate you from what's going on down below.

The trick, as William Toby Jr., the new administrator of Medicare and Medicaid, recently observed, is to realize that "Problems arise first at the lower levels," and that people on those levels "are much more aware of the problems." OMB staffers today do not make a practice of interviewing government employees at the lower levels. They don't have the time. That's why we need more of them. But we also need a different kind of OMB employee. Most of them are bright young policy analysts who know how to crunch numbers but not how to interview

When *Death* is Preferable To Life

Someone you love is dying. She is incontinent, racked with pain, unable to drink, eat or even care. Medical technology works overtime, even when the body can't go on. The grieving family looks to medical professionals for answers that may never come. Sad scenarios like this are played out every day all over the United States.

New directions in social legislation are often the result of leadership from the public at large. Hemlock is the leadership group in the Death With Dignity movement.

You can learn more about Hemlock. There is a Hemlock chapter near you. Write or call today. Ask for Introductory Packet F.

THE HEMLOCK SOCIETY U.S.A.
P.O. Box 11830
Eugene, Oregon 97440
TEL: 800/247-7421

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

people so that they can get the significant anecdotes that give life and meaning to the statistics. . .

Just a day after the White House and the press sank Attorney General candidate Kimba Wood—despite the fact that she had fully complied with immigration and Social Security laws—Commerce Secretary Ron Brown admitted he had violated the law by not paying Social Security taxes for domestic help. Yet, Brown emerged from Nannygate unscathed. While television at first gave Brown's violation top-of-the-news play, *The Washington Post* buried it on page four, giving the networks the excuse to lose interest after just one day of coverage. Why the sudden disappearance of the type of attack-dog coverage that followed Wood and (although belatedly) Zoë Baird? Perhaps the *Post* felt that the press had overreacted in those cases and was now attempting to practice some self control. But feminists are asking why the tough treatment ended when a man became involved in the scandal. They might be interested to learn that the *Post* editor who made the decision to bury the Brown story is male. . . .

A classic line in the literature of government is the sentence spoken by the late Marvella Bayh who, just after learning that her husband had been elected to the Senate, hugged her father and exclaimed, "Daddy, this means that I may get to go to Europe!"

Similar expectations about the opportunity to travel seem to afflict practically everyone in the federal government. A recent audit of the Department of Interior found more than $115,000 in unauthorized and questionable travel expenses, and, even in the closing days of the Bush administration, officials whose duties were about to end managed to arrange exotic trips. Barbara Franklin, Bush's secretary of Commerce, went to Beijing. Some of her aides also arranged an additional jaunt to Russia where, according to State Department sources of *The New York Times*, "More planning has gone into the amenities for a luxury train trip from Moscow to St. Petersburg than into the actual [business] agenda for the trip."

On December 28, Dan Quayle used Air Force Two to fly from Vail, Colorado, to Glendale, Arizona, accompanied by his cousin Bradley Quayle and another guest. He played golf at Scottsdale and returned to Vail the next day. The cost of that trip to taxpayers: $13,700. . . .

The disadvantage of working for a monthly instead of a daily is that your ideas sometimes occur to other writers who can get them into print faster than you can. Thus having noticed the explosion of Clinton/Gore bumperstickers in Washington *after* the election, I was eager to share the news with our readers in this issue, but before I could do so, Maureen Dowd wrote about it in *The New York Times*. The point, of course, is that the Washington establishment always rushes to "get right"—as we refer to it in West Virginia politics—with the new administration. . . .

Speaking of West Virginia politics, I sent the analysis of the 1960 West Virginia primary that appeared in this space in our last issue to Richard Donahue, who is now president of Nike but who in 1960 was the person other than myself most knowledgeable about what was done in the Kennedy campaign in Kanawha County. He agrees with me in all but one respect. He says we finally gave the local organization $25,000, instead of the $12,000 I knew we had originally committed. Since Dick was actually the man who handled the money, I defer to him on this question. Still, since Kanawha County had somewhat more than 10 percent of West Virginia's voters, his figure remains consistent with my conviction that the Kennedys spent less than the $500,000 that was customary in West Virginia's gubernatorial campaigns of that era, an amount that could not have produced the 60-40 margin by which JFK won the 1960 primary.

One factor in our winning a majority of the clean vote in Kanawha County—which you will recall was a majority of the total vote—was the work of several hundred unpaid volunteers. They distributed 40,000 copies of that *Reader's Digest* story about Kennedy's heroism. They telephoned voters to determine who was leaning toward Kennedy and called all the leaners again on election day to make sure they got to the polls.

Although the volunteers were enthusiastic, dedicated, and in no sense the corrupt pols that outsiders imagine are the only participants in West Virginia elections, there was one fact that I did not hasten to disclose to journalists who were covering the race. Most of them had names like Higgins and Shaughnessy and O'Toole. A very high proportion were Catholics. In fact, since the number of Catholics in West Virginia is tiny—I believe about 4 percent at that time—practically all of them seemed to be working for us. Because West Virginia was supposed to test Kennedy's appeal to Protestants, we did not rush to publicize this fact. But the group did help to explain Kennedy's ultimate nationwide victory in November. Many of them were traditionally conservative, but they were attracted to Kennedy because of Catholic pride. Their

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

How to Be Religious Without Losing Your Mind

Among the well-educated the myth still circulates that religion is the preserve of the dim-witted, unlettered, and irrational, that the price of salvation is checking your mind at the Pearly Gates. Yet, from Harvard to Berkeley, and among inquisitive people generally, there's an undeniable renewal of interest in the questions traditional religion raises and seeks to answer. This fascination is largely the result of the failure of secular substitutes for religion (such as positivism, rationalism, hedonism, consumerism, technological utopianism, Freudianism, and Marxism) to give abidingly satisfying answers to the truly significant puzzles in life: evil, goodness, suffering, love, death, and the meaning of it all.

Contrary to stereotypes, this religious renaissance does not imply a retreat from working for peace, justice, and human dignity; nor does it signify a hostility to science, only an appreciation of the limits of science and technology.

We at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW are spearheading today's intellectual engagement with the sacred. Among other things, we scrutinize the religious dimensions of the great events and issues of the past and present, and probe the wisdom offered not only by the Bible and Church fathers, but also by such giants as St. Francis, Aquinas, Dante, Kierkegaard, Newman, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Bonhoeffer, Barth, Niebuhr, Gandhi, Buber, Auden, Eliot, Silone, Maritain, Merton, Schumacher, Thomas More, Dorothy Day, C.S. Lewis, Martin Luther King, Flannery O'Connor, Mother Teresa, and Archbishops Romero and Tutu.

An ecumenical monthly edited by lay Catholics, we've been characterized by George Will as "splendid," by the University of Chicago's Martin E. Marty as "lively," by the *Los Angeles Times* as "influential," by *Newsweek* as "thoughtful and often cheeky," by *Utne Reader* as "surprisingly original," by *Library Journal* as "brilliant," and by Christopher Derrick, England's foremost Catholic apologist, as "by far the best Catholic magazine in the English-speaking world."

We publish Protestants, Catholics, Anglicans, Eastern Orthodox, Jews, and an occasional nonbeliever. Writers who've appeared in our pages include such diversely penetrating intellects as Robert Bellah, Christopher Lasch, Jean Bethke Elshtain, Daniel Bell, Robert Coles, Irving Howe, Walker Percy, Norman Lear, John Lukacs, J.M. Cameron, Henri Nouwen, Avery Dulles, Gordon Zahn, Will Campbell, Stanley Hauerwas, Richard Mouw, and Sheldon Vanauken. We bat around a wide variety of issues and defy easy ideological pigeonholing. We'll keep you on your toes!

Whether or not you're Catholic, if you yearn for a sane, intelligent, and nonglitzy exploration of the religious dimensions of our lives and our world, we invite you to get to know us.

(Please allow 2 to 8 weeks for delivery of first issue)

SPECIAL DISCOUNT RATES FOR FIRST-TIME SUBSCRIBERS

- ☐ One-year subscription. . . . . .$14 (regularly $19)
- ☐ One-year student, unemployed, or retired person's subscription . . . . . .$12 (regularly $16)
- ☐ Two-year subscription . . . . .$23 (regularly $35)
- ☐ One-year Canadian or foreign subscription . . . . US$17 (regularly $22) Payment must be drawn in US Dollars
- ☐ Sample copy. $3.50

NAME (Please print or type)

STREET ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP CODE

Send coupon or letter. Make check payable to NEW OXFORD REVIEW. Mail to:

NEW OXFORD REVIEW
Room 302
1069 Kains Ave.
Berkeley, CA 94706

PAYMENT MUST ACCOMPANY ORDER

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

switch from the Republican to the Democratic column was crucial to JFK's margin over Nixon. What is interesting is that a lot became liberal, thanks to the influence of both Kennedy and Pope John XXIII, and stayed that way at least through the rest of the sixties. . . .

There is nothing I would like to see more than a national service program that would awaken the long–dormant idealism of the American people. But I'm doubtful that Clinton is the man to put it all together. After all, the elite of his generation thought it had done its part by listening to Joan Baez sing at antiwar rallies. The elite who came after Clinton's contemporaries, those who are now in their thirties and early forties and dominant in Clinton's staff, haven't even done *that* much. No service. Not in the military. Not in the Peace Corps. Not in Vista. Because they have so little sense of obligation themselves, they think that people have to be bribed to serve, with, for example, a free college education for a couple years of service.

Because they haven't served, they're unlikely to understand how to make a service program work. First and foremost, it must have jobs that count—not only because there is real work out there that desperately needs doing in health, education, public safety, and the environment—but because, as I had engraved on my brain during my seven years with the Peace Corps, volunteers quickly become demoralized if they're just doing make-work. This means that the Clintonites are going to have to take on the teachers' unions and the police and hospital and government employees' unions if they're going to put volunteers in jobs that count.

These can be tough problems for a president who wants to be liked. On the other hand, I can promise him that if he can unlock that idealism in the American character, he will go down in history as one of our greatest presidents. . . .

One problem with the Clintonites' failure to serve is that because few have ever been in the military, they failed to anticipate the outrage aroused by the proposal to lift the ban on homosexuals. I support Clinton on lifting the ban, just as I agreed with his opposition to the Vietnam War. But the unfortunate truth is that his failure to serve in the military may have contributed to his inability to lead the military now. . . .

Usually, as in the case of the Ron Browns and Lloyd Bentsens, we worry about how an appointee's business connections will influence his official actions. But in the case of Thomas McLarty, the new White House chief of staff, I fear the opposite—the inhibiting effect of such concern. His background in the natural gas industry should not keep the administration from pushing for more use of natural gas, which will help decrease pollution and dependency on foreign oil. . . .

My guess is that the hardest-to-pass element of the Clinton economic program (but also one of the fairest) will be the proposal to increase the portion of Social Security benefits that we subject to taxation from 50 to 85 percent for individuals with incomes of more than $25,000 and couples with more than $32,000. One reason is careless reporting in the media that frightens the elderly into thinking something far worse is being proposed, as was the case with the catastrophic care act five years ago (see "What Clinton Could Learn from the Catastrophic Care Catastrophe," p. 39). For example, on February 15th and 16th, CNN and the *Washington Times* both reported that Clinton proposed to raise rates to 85 percent, when what most people will be paying is 28 percent of 85 percent....

You remember that item about the cop whose dog was impounded for the sins of the cop who went free? Well, I've got another story almost as outrageous. It's about the former Senate sergeant–at–arms, who had pleaded guilty to accepting a first-class, round trip ticket to Hawaii from AT&T after he had recommended that the Senate award the company a $219,000 contract. His punishment: Repay AT&T for the price of the ticket. Certainly the sergeant–at–arms should be punished, but did it not occur to Charles Richey, the judge who took this action, that AT&T should not only not be repaid the amount of its attempted bribe but should itself be punished? . . .

Has the radical left disappeared from the American scene? What has happened to the idealists who believed in redistributing income from the rich to the poor? The reason I ask is that, as the various possibilities for increasing taxes on the rich were being discussed this winter, the highest rate suggested was 38 percent. But just a decade ago the rate for income above $200,000 was 49 percent. To be sure, scores of loopholes were available to those who wanted to avoid paying that much. But 40 years ago the rate was 91 percent and the loopholes not nearly as numerous. Back then, most taxpayers paid what they were supposed to pay. And their initiative was not sapped. The economy, in the midst of a great boom, had already flourished for a decade under similarly high tax rates and continued to flourish for many more years under rates much

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

higher than Clinton is proposing. Although I appear to be the most radical around at the moment, I've never considered myself a radical redistributionist. Indeed, I agree with the statement made by Mickey Kaus, whose book we honor in this issue (Political Book Award, p. 34), that "the venerable liberal crusade for income equality is doomed," and that we should concentrate on attaining another great liberal goal, social equality, by making money less relevant to such essentials as education and health care. However—and this to me is a big however—I do not think abandoning the goal of income equality means we should abandon the fight against the extremes of income *inequality* that developed during the Reagan-Bush era. So while I do not advocate hitting the rich with another 91 percent rate, a return to the 49 percent rate without unreasonable loopholes seems more desireable than letting the affluent off with 36 or 38 percent, especially if such kindness means that the tax burden on families with incomes under $50,000 has to be increased.

The radical idealists have been so thoroughly coopted by the greed and selfishness of the last 20 years that it's been difficult for us to find a respectable source who has even bothered to estimate the revenue that much higher rates will produce. Our best guess is that 49 percent will pull in $35 billion a year. Another way to sock it to the wealthy is to require those who earn more than $55,000 a year to pay FICA on the rest of their income without giving them additional benefits, which would produce another $30 billion. Changing the amount excluded for the estate tax from $600,000 to $300,000 and closing the angel of death loophole, still another way to help the affluent do their part, would raise $80 billion by the end of this decade.

The point is that we are in a fiscal emergency and that the people who profited most—especially during the last decade—and are thus most able to afford to make a sacrifice, should do so. During another national emergency, FDR proposed limiting incomes to $25,000. Remember that, Bill Clinton, when you want to understand how great men lead. . . .

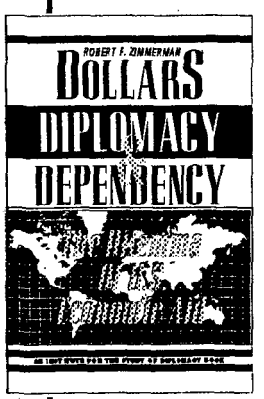
A friend who spent a lot of time with George Bush during the campaign tells me that the reason Bush was afraid of debating Clinton on the economy was that he feared his memory would fail him where numbers were concerned, and that Clinton would come up with figures Bush couldn't challenge. In this case, I can say I have the deepest sympathy for the former president. If I don't write down a phone number the second it's given to me, it's lost forever. . . .

—*Charles Peters*

Lynne Rienner Publishers

Politics Without Principle
Sovereignty, Ethics, and the Narratives of the Gulf War
David Campbell

Campbell probes the discourse of moral certitude through which, in unambiguous ethical terms, the U.S. and its allies located with Iraq the responsibility for evil • 1993 • hc/$26.50



Dollars, Diplomacy, and Dependency
Dilemmas of U.S. Economic Aid
Robert F. Zimmerman

Zimmerman demonstrates that U.S. foreign economic assistance has largely failed to achieve its economic and social development goals, primarily because it has been used first and foremost as a tool to promote U.S. political and security objectives.

1993 • hc/$42.00 • pb/$17.95
An Institute for the Study of Diplomacy Book

1800 30th Street • Boulder, CO 80301 • (303) 444-6684

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Heavy Medals

What Miller Lite, Carol Burnett, and Gerald Ford have in common

by David Segal

Awards! That's all they do is give out awards, I can't believe it. "Greatest Fascist Dictator: Adolph Hitler."

—Annie Hall

He was razzing Hollywood, but Woody Allen's joke works just as well with journalism, a field in which fascist dictators are about the only crowd left without their very own award niche. Reporters covering reconstructive surgery of the face, head and neck, for instance, can win a plaque and cash from the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery. Fashion writers who've penned something snazzy about men's wear can apply for the Aldo Awards. A thoroughbred horse-racing aficionado? Go for the Eclipse award. A bowling fan? Send the American Bowling Congress awards some clips and you could be $3,800 in *Bowling Magazine* gift certificates in the black. And don't panic if you write stories about radiology, interpersonal violence, arthritis, the Michigan justice system, or cholesterol. There are prizes for them too.

Some awards are so specialized that they seem to have been created with the winner in mind. How many people are even eligible for the Master Editor "Golden Em" Award, which honors a Southern Illinois editor of a high-quality newspaper with 20 or more years of experience? Other awards you could apply for but wouldn't want. I'd happily pocket the thousand dollars that comes with the Engineering/Land Surveying Communications Award, but only if I could pass on the requisite trip to the association's annual meeting. The Best of the West award sounds like something worth winning, but it's unlikely you'd recoup the $10 application fee if you hocked the grand prize—a medallion.

Even celebrities are getting into the game. Former tabloid plaintiff Carol Burnett gives out an ethics-in-journalism prize through the University of Hawaii. Isaiah Thomas, of all people, gives one out through the Rochester Institute of Technology, of all places. Gerald Ford doles out two prizes that are largely ignored, Hugh Hefner gives out one that is highly coveted (first place is $5,000, and the luncheon has potential). Big business has followed suit. Now offering Oscars of their own are General Motors, Westinghouse, JC Penney, Nestlé, New Jersey Bell, and Miller Lite, which gives one out for writing about women in sports. A few conventions-worth of professional associations—from chiropractors to aircraft owners—have joined the fun too.

Research assistance for this article was provided by Ann O'Hanlon and Rebecca Evans.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

These awards, in combination with the handful that journalists actually know about and want, make the industry among the most over-decorated in America. And more arrive all the time. The 1988 edition of *Awards, Honors, and Prizes* found 170 journalism awards; the 1992 edition found over 300.

Which leads to an obvious question: So what? "Some glitter more than others, but can you have too many diamonds?" asks Livingston Award director Charles Eisendrath. Indeed, if executives at Nestlé want to write reporters checks, let them. Does anyone believe that the company's baby formula scandal, for instance, would have been overlooked simply because of a contest? Above all else, news folk love good stories and generally speaking they'd sooner eat their young than let the memory of an engraving and a check stand between them and a scoop. Nor, one suspects, will prizes cause journalists to neglect unawarded topics to focus where the laurels are. Sure, the Capt. Fred E. Lawton Boating Award's $1,000 and pair of captain's decanters make an enticing package, but will there be more pieces about marine safety because of them?

Which is not to say that awards don't matter. Landing a prestigious award can be a boost for morale, a leg up for a career, even a boon to the bottom line for today's ad-starved magazines and newspapers. The question is how awards have influenced the business and, more specifically, whether they have produced better journalism. The answer to that last question, alas, is both yes and no. Journalism's growing trophy culture is not entirely good news for journalism.

Win, place, and show-off

The proliferation of prizes has clearly added a superfluous layer of credentialism to the business. Increasingly, reporters are only as good as what they've won. Ask a newsroom veteran to fax you a bio these days and you're more likely to get a litany of honors than a resume. National Public Radio's press releases on new hires usually ballyhoo little more than prizes. Many newspapers and radio stations pressure their employees to spend time filling out applications. ABC News values awards enough to employ two people whose full-time job is landing them for shows, correspondents, and producers.

But when they are little more than résumé ornaments and revenue enhancers, prizes aren't really doing their job. For readers, the case for awards is that they can correct the limits of the marketplace by bringing about public service journalism that is excellent and necessary but not always lucrative.

That's where prestigious honors are supposed to come in. The great five-part thumbsucker series that has long been a staple of newspaper journalism, the dull piece that's worthy but won't help sales—these species might have vanished from the planet years ago were it not for the Pulitzers. "With some of these stories, editors are not necessarily thinking of readers," says Ken Auletta, who writes a media column for *The New Yorker.* "When the *Chicago Tribune* does a huge take-out on the underclass, you can bet they've got one eye cocked toward the Pulitzer." Last year Minneapolis's *Star Tribune* did a 25-part series on how to care for the aged. *The Richmond Times-Dispatch* published thousands of column inches in tens of stories on shrink-swell soil and its destructive effects on a planned community. Chances are these articles would have been written no matter what, but it's less likely that they'd have gotten the same in-depth treatment were it not for the Pulitzer committee, which, by the way, is where both of these series was sent.

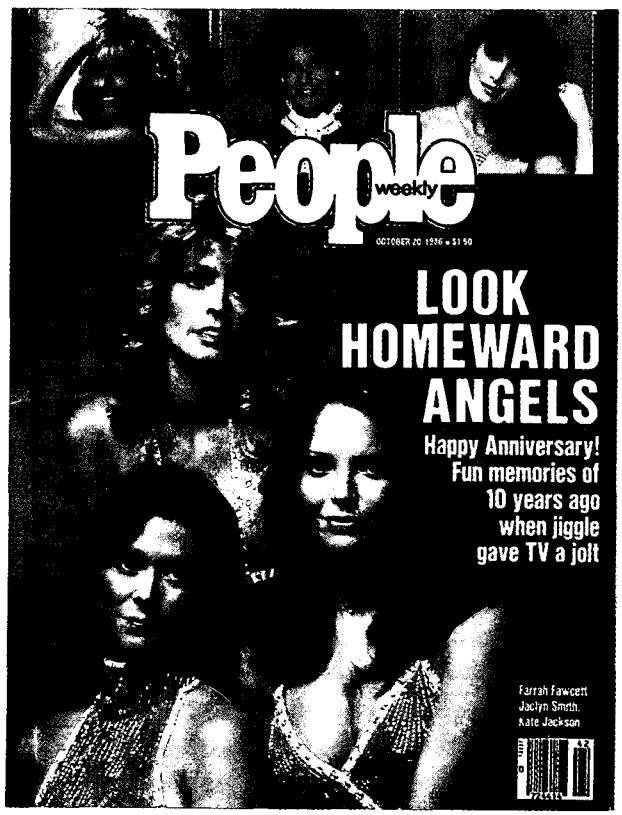
Few of these long pieces attract new readers or raise ad rates. (Bartlett and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Steele's series for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* on the Bush and Reagan years, which was subsequently turned into a best-selling paperback, is a rarity.) But if managing editors are assigning these articles for the glory rather than the intrinsic frisson of community service, who really cares? "Daily newspapers have been taken over by polls and focus groups rewarding ever shorter and ever dumber stories," says Mike Lacey, executive editor of New Times Inc., which owns four alternative newspapers. "If it takes journalism prizes to get newspapers to fight that trend, then my feeling is, well, whatever it takes."

Which suggests that the right way to judge an award is by the type of journalism it seeks to provoke. The *Monthly*, for instance, has given out an award with each issue since 1981 in an effort to encourage colleagues to take on the important, though not always sexy, topics that matter. The Sidney Hillman Foundation has set its sights higher—unrealistically high, perhaps—by urging journalism that achieves nothing less than "the protection of individual civil liberties, improved race relations, a strengthened labor movement, advancement of social welfare and economic security, and greater world understanding." The only award that's equally ambitious is the New York State Common Cause "I Love an Ethical New York" Media Awards Competition (honest, that's what it's called), which seeks to "improve the ethical climate for New York's public life."

If these awards aim high but lack the cachet to single-handedly nudge the craft in a certain direction, the National Magazine Awards may suffer from the opposite problem. Read the list of General Excellence winners and you get a sense of how the game works. In the smallest circulation category, the prize invariably goes to a serious, hard-hitting, news-oriented outfit, such as *The Nation*, *Common Cause*, or *The New Republic*. But in the higher circulation brackets, exposés give way to "jewelry of the stars" features, consumer advocacy gives way to come-ons for Lancôme Oil-Free Hydrating Fluide, and tough profiles give way to doe-eyed celebrity suck-ups.Past winners in General Excellence include *Mirabella*, *Elle*, *People*, and, most frequently, *Glamour*.



Journalism that jiggles. The National Magazine Award's 1987 winner, General Excellence.

The criterion for General Excellence, as you might imagine, is marvelously elastic. The American Society of Magazine Editors (ASME), sponsor of the award, stipulates that entries—three issues of a magazine from the past year—arrive with an editorial statement of purpose, and the magazine that comes closest to fulfilling that purpose wins. It's standards like these that allowed *People*, for instance, to beat out fellow finalists *National Geographic* and *Time* in 1987, and have permitted *Glamour* to win twice, while *U.S. News & World Report* has been consistently shut out. This may sound like sour grapes coming from a magazine that has applied for this award for years and made the finals just once. But at least the *Monthly* is up against competition it can be proud to lose to, whereas when *Newsweek* doesn't win, *House and Garden* does.

Which is not to say that the glossies that triumph so often are utterly fiber-less. One of *Glamour*'s winning issues in 1990 ran an article on RU 486 and the results of a college rape study. But these pieces are swamped by items like "Great Legs!—Your Surest Route to Short Skirt Confidence," "Why Claudia Schiffer *isn't* the Next Bardot," and "Quick and Sexy Beauty Dares," making substance in this magazine seem like a side order of spinach at a jelly doughnut buffet. When *People* won for General Excellence in 1987, the winning cover stories were an exclusive re-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

port on Sinatra's life and loves, the results of the eighth annual readers' poll crowning Whitney Houston top new star, and a 10-year retrospective on Charlie's Angels.

In the higher circulation categories, it's hard to avoid the conclusion that the judges—overwhelmingly from the larger, shinier magazines—see these awards not so much as a means to tease out better journalism, but as an opportunity to congratulate what you might call, in honor of the conglomerate owner of consistent winners, Condé Nastiness—fat, flush, perfumed and perfectly bound pages, the kind the Pulitzer committee would likely ignore if it gave out a magazine prize. And by tapping *Harper's*, for instance, at the low end, ASME allows some of the leaner (and meaner) media's gravitas to waft upward. The top cover line on one of *Glamour*'s winning issues asked, "Do you think about sex too much?" and offered readers two options: "Yes" and "Oh, yes!" In the award citation, however, the judges deadpanned that the magazine "radiates integrity, and never condescends to its audience; rather it deals directly with tough issues."

"It's hard for me to judge in terms of ad sales," says *Glamour*'s editor-in-chief, Ruth Whitney, "but winning certainly makes a difference in the seriousness with which people take the magazine." So ASME has stood the logic of awards upside down: instead of rewarding what doesn't work in the market but is worthy, they reward what works in the market but doesn't get awards. This is no doubt a valuable service to certain magazines; whether it is a service to readers is another matter.

Sick story

Even when an award is more bent on lauding serious reporting than business boosterism, it can generally be counted on to come up with a short list comprised of "safe" journalism. Safe in this context does not mean non-controversial—in fact, it means just the opposite. The more waves an entry has made, the better, and if it caused the president's press secretary to issue red-faced denials, it's got more than a fighting chance. Ideally, the safe story accuses some powerful and oily public figure—Kissinger and Meese come to mind—of being a criminal. The safe story's politics are usually liberal, but not too liberal.

Many safe stories deserve awards, but journalism's weakness for them is occasionally problematic. Take the October Surprise. When Gary Sick's op-ed appeared in *The New York Times,* it had all the trappings of a winner: a respected author with sterling Democratic credentials and a thesis startling enough to become a campaign issue and spark separate House and Senate investigations. The problem is that everyone who has studied the story—among them, Congressional investigators, who published lengthy reports, and *The New Republic*, which published a 12,000 word cover story entitled "What October Surprise?"—has concluded that nearly all of the story's sources and evidence wilt under the lights.

There *is* reason to believe that the Republicans had a source in Carter's National Security Council. But even though yarns like Sick's are difficult to discredit completely—it's hard to prove an event *didn't* happen—the October Surprise looks safely debunked. Before being thoroughly sniffed over, however, the op-ed which launched the story won the Silver prize from the Opinion Page Editors Association.

Then there's *The Samson Option*, Seymour Hersh's exposé on Israel's clandestine nuclear program. The book came with a pair of headline-grabbing revelations: that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir had handed over American intelligence to the Soviets, and that deceased British publishing magnate Robert Maxwell had ties to top Israeli leadership. The first item came from confirmed psychobabbler Ari Ben-Menashe, a man who falsely claims to have been instrumental in both the Israeli raid on Entebbe in 1976 and the bombing of Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor. (Ben-Menashe was, not coincidentally, also a key source for Sick's story.)

The second item came from Joe Flynn, a semiprofessional hoax artist who previously had wheedled £25,000 from Rupert Murdoch by selling him a pair of shoes allegedly belonging to Jimmy Hoffa. Several weeks after *The Samson Option* hit bookstores, Flynn surfaced to say that he had sold Hersh the Maxwell story, and the London *Sunday Times* subsequently ran an article in which Hersh admitted to being hoodwinked. Meanwhile, in the fallout over the October Surprise, Ari Ben-Menashe was exposed as a liar.

Any reporter could be duped, but Hersh had been warned about Ben-Menashe as he was writing the book and willfully ignored evidence that contradicted his source, some of which was presented to him by other journalists. In another business, this sort of performance wouldn't be celebrated, but *The Samson Option* was as safe as journalism gets (government lies, a mogul colluding with an intelligence agency) and it went on to win the Investigative Reporter and Editor's Book Award. Hersh has won—and deserved—over 50 journalism prizes, but this episode and the October Surprise story suggest that awards reflect and magnify one of journalism's signal weaknesses: As a group, reporters tend to be skeptical of governments, but very rarely skeptical of the skeptics.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

At least part of the reason that safe stories fare so well in awards is that virtually all prizes are selected by committee—Polk, duPont and RFK winners, for instance, are unanimous choices—and committees, as they search for consensus, inevitably gravitate toward the conventional. Some awards have tried to end-run this tendency by allowing judges to put one favorite into the finals, even if it has no other supporters. This can work. The Livingston, for instance, has given out prizes to quirky pieces, such as H.G. Bisinger's account for *The St. Paul Pioneer Press* of a plane that plunged six miles but did not crash. More common, however, is the experience of the National Magazine Awards. The most frequently cited writer in the award's history is a certain John Peckannon, who authored solid, though plain, articles on health for *Washingtonian* magazine.

The committee system also helps explain why writers on the far left and the right usually fare miserably in journalism contests. The most dramatic example of this came last year when the Pulitzer committee declined to give out any award in criticism after screeners came up with three decidedly unconventional finalists: *Village Voice* drama critic Michael Feingold, *Village Voice* advertising critic Leslie Savan, and a *Los Angeles Times* writer named Itabari Njeri. Feingold probably had not endeared himself to the committee when he savaged *Miss Saigon* by announcing that "*The New York Times* must be firebombed into nothingness . . . while Cameron Mackintosh and his production staff should be slowly beaten to death with blunt instruments; this year's Pulitzer Prize judges in drama could be used for the job."

Itabari Njeri may not have helped her cause by beginning a piece about black-Korean relations with this quote: "To put it bluntly, the larger problem is the way capitalism works." Though not conventional liberal voices, each of these three writers got to the finals for good reasons. The Pulitzer judges, however, were not impressed and Michael Gartner, the Pulitzer Board Chairman, told the *Los Angeles Times* that "while all three of the finalists in criticism this year were interesting, none of them were of Pulitzer Prize caliber."

The other end of the political spectrum has it just as hard. George Will is one of the rare Republicans who wins awards, but for the most part, conservative reporters and commentators are at a distinct disadvantage. Tory sympathizer Tom Wolfe, for example, has complained that at prize time he consistently gets passed over, even though he's credited as the chief progenitor of an original brand of journalism. P.J. O'Rourke's essays on politics are among the most trenchant out there, but he's an unabashed law and order Reaganaut with an attitude and has only the H.L. Mencken Award to show for his efforts.

Having the right kind of politics helps, but being known by the judges helps too. It's been pointed out elsewhere that *The New York Times* has had a presence on the Pulitzer committee 69 of the 76 years the prize has been given out, and it's well known that the newspaper of record has collected enough Pulitzers to clog an attic. But the big newspapers whose editors are consistently asked to join the committee have the clout and cash to hire the best reporters and to put out the best products. There *are* stories about log-rolling and back scratching—is it just a coincidence that *Glamour*'s editor-in-chief chaired the National Magazine Awards the same year that the magazine won for both General Excellence *and* Reporting? But in a business as insular and small as journalism, sometimes the people you know are simply the best out there. Mickey Kaus wrote the most thought-provoking, readable, talked-about book on social policy this year. His tenure at the *Monthly* seemed to the editors here a lousy reason not to recognize his achievement with this year's Political Book Award.

But it's journalism's insularity that provides a final cautionary note about awards. Reporters are a nomadic lot and tend to move between papers and magazines frequently. "Everyone is basically worried about where they will be in the next five years," said one investigative journalist. Any reporter and editor is thus a potential colleague or boss, which has always been an impetus for aspiring writers not to offend others in the business, even when they are wrong. Since judges and screeners for virtually every award out there are journalists (usually established and powerful ones at that), awards are another reason not to criticize someone within the field. And even if someone isn't a paladin giving out honors now, in a few years, who knows?

Which suggests that the more important awards become, the less internal criticism you're likely to hear from journalists. It's for this reason that there may be slightly more at stake with these prizes than careers. A quiescent media is in no one's interest but the media's; readers are best served by journalists and editors who aren't afraid to take each other to task when the occasion warrants. In the best of all possible worlds, prestigious awards would simply lead to sharper and more in-depth journalism while the less known ones simply enhance incomes.

And if present trends continue, it's only a matter of time before there will be so many of the latter out there that they'll form a trade association for journalism awards. You can bet that when they announce their own contest, I'll submit this piece for a prize. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TIDBITS & OUTRAGES

"HEY, WE WERE IMPROVING *OUR* ENVIRONMENT," EXPLAINED ONE EPA OFFICIAL. *The Chicago Tribune* reports that the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency spent more than $420,000 on new furniture last year, even though Illinois maintains a warehouse full of furniture for state offices. Most of the money for the purchases came from special funds earmarked for cleaning up the environment.

"I TOLD YOU I WAS THE CANDIDATE OF CHANGE."
Shortly after her election to the U.S. Senate, Carol Moseley Braun moved out of her South Side neighborhood into a $3,000-a-month apartment on the Lake Michigan shoreline and took a month-long vacation, which included flights on the Concorde.

THANKS, BUT WE'LL STICK WITH THE MATTRESS-SIDE THEORY
Former Reagan economics adviser Arthur Laffer is now the co-owner of an investment firm that claims it "applies supply-side theory to investing."

PLEASE ADDRESS COVER SHEETS TO JEHOVAH, LORD OF HOSTS
Israel's national phone company has established a fax number for sending pleas for divine intervention to Jerusalem's Wailing Wall.

CREDIBILITY GULF
During his failed campaign last fall for the Ohio state senate, Randy Puraty ran an ad showing him wearing a Marine camouflage uniform and running into the arms of his wife and children while an announcer stated, "After serving his country in Operation Desert Storm, Randy Puraty came home to face another fight, the fight for more jobs." But actually the homecoming scene was staged, and although Puraty, a Marine reservist, was ordered to active duty during the Gulf war, he was never in the Persian Gulf; he spent his call-up time in the Philippines as a logistics officer. In defense of his commercial, Puraty told reporters, "You're writers. You understand metaphor."

—Scott Shuger

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Fax and Spend

One bureaucrat explains how his agency's technology bedevils his life and wastes your money

by Clifford Adelman

Every 25 minutes, the lights go out. I sit at my government desk doing what government desk-sitters do: crunch data on the computer, write memos and reports, edit documents, answer mail from citizens, and make and answer phone calls. I may squirm around during all of this, but I stay in my chair. Then, the lights go out.

It's the sensor's fault. If there's no movement in the room for 25 minutes, the light circuit shuts down. To turn the lights back on, I have to get out of my chair and walk until the sensor tells the electrical system that there's something alive in the room.

The round trip across the room costs the government two minutes of my time every hour. That turns out to be 17 minutes a day, 85 minutes a week, 4,250 minutes or approximately 71 hours per year. The system was installed by the building's owner to save on the power bill. I don't know whether the savings are passed on to the government, but I doubt it. At the rate I am paid (including benefits), the light sensor costs the government about $3,800 in lost labor annually.

To save that time (and Uncle Sam that money), I plan to buy a used basketball at a yard sale. Then, when the lights go out, I'll throw it at the filing cabinets opposite my desk to trip the sensor. The ball will bounce neatly back under my desk.

The new administration is considering ways to cut at least 100,000 jobs in the civilian federal workforce over the next five years. There's no doubt that some agencies are bloated and, as any thorough desk audit would reveal, could take the hit. But new technologies—light sensors among them—are partly responsible for the bloat. The time I spend trekking across rooms to turn lights back on means less time to cover a given territory of tasks. And that in turn means someone else has to pick up the work I cannot complete.

Light sensors are just the beginning. Have you ever phoned the most technologically advanced offices within any federal agency? Here's what you're likely to hear: Voice Mail Machine #1: "Good day! You have reached the Office of Technological Planning, Management, and Evaluation Systems of the U.S. Department of Blah Blah. If you have a touch-tone phone and wish to speak to the computer branch, press one, followed by the pound key, now; if you wish to speak to the telecommunications branch, press two, followed by the pound key. . . ."

Anyone who has recently called the government can tell you that between the time you pick up the phone and work through three voice mail machines to leave your message, four to five minutes will have elapsed. In that time, you could deliver your message in person.

I make about eight calls a day to federal offices. If all of them are answered by voice mail relays, we're talking about 20 minutes a day or about 83 hours per year. No one will ever know what the government paid to have these diabolical systems installed, but I hope it is less, on an annual basis, than the $4,500 in my labor time (including benefits) which you, dear taxpayers, are shelling out for me not to talk on the phone.

When I'm not on the phone leaving a message, chances are I'm at work on my computer, one that recently hooked into a local area network (LAN) system. It's worse than the lights.

Before LANs, the government supplied me with a 286/12 computer with a 40-megabyte hard disk and

Clifford Adelman is a senior associate in the Office of Research, U.S. Department of Education. This article was prepared in his capacity as a private citizen, and no endorsement by the Department should be inferred. Illustration by Bill Holbrook.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a 1,200 baud modem. This technology is about as cutting edge as an Etch-A-Sketch. Nonetheless, when I turned on my antique, I could check the whole machine for viruses and get into a software program in 22 seconds. If I used the modem to dial a mainframe computer to analyze data bases, it took 42 seconds.

With LAN and a new computer, the machine runs through so many loops and synapses that getting into a software program takes not 22 seconds, but 150 seconds. To call up a mainframe computer and log-on to analyze large scale data takes three minutes, an eternity in computer time.

What are the benefits of the LAN system? At present, the only advantage it offers over the old system is to allow me to use a printer located 350 feet from my office (as opposed to the old printer located 10 feet away). This means that retrieving documents now takes five to six minutes, round trip. Most of the documents I write use either official memo paper or departmental letterhead, which, of course, means yet another 700 foot round-trip to change the paper each time I want to print.

Consequently, I now write my letters by hand. It's faster, more charming, and if your letter to the president is about, say, college tuition or university research overhead charges, there's a good chance you'll get a hand-inked response from me.

My only regret is that I won't be sending you this hypothetical letter by fax. Then again, you're probably better off. The fax machine was supposed to make communication nearly instantaneous. Insert the original into the feeder, dial the number, watch the missive get sucked into the electronic maw, pick up the original, and walk away. Easy, right?

Nope. Say you want to send a fax to a government agency on the other side of the Mall, or a national association downtown. Chances are you're not the only one, which means the queue can be up to a few hours long. After your machine tries four times to get through, it quits and belches out a busy signal. Unless you or your secretary check the centrally located (read: down the hall 100 feet, through two doorways, take a right at the corridor) machine every 25 minutes, your fax may be in a holding pattern for hours, maybe even days.

This fax purgatory makes me nostalgic for the days when we sent spandexed bikers careening through L Street traffic or when we used the "red bag," picked up every three hours by an assistant secretary's special messenger. I've clocked the "red bag" against the fax that fails to transmit on the first try. It's a dead heat.

Actually, technology is only part of the problem; we're the rest. Consider the typical government agency's computer generated mailing lists. These are often filled with "deads and duplicates," a category including folks who were last heard from when Truman was veep. Figure in people who have moved so many times that the Mafia couldn't find them, and folks whose names appear twice or thrice, each time with a slightly different spelling or zip code (including ones that put residents of Ohio in Texas). In a typical mass mailing of a free government publication to targeted mailing lists, 10 to 15 percent of the generated labels are "deads and duplicates." Trees, time, staff, postal service: however you count it, it's waste.

The only way to prevent this waste is to strip the D&Ds by hand from each set of labels produced for specific mailings. It takes me the equivalent of a solid weekend at my dining room table to do this for a set of 3,500–4,000 labels. At the rate of four publications a year, that means 64 hours of unnecessary labor at a cost to the government of about $3,200.

I'm one of the people on those mailing lists. As recently as 1991, I was receiving an average of 12 first class mail items a month from my own agency, going out on the third floor and coming back in on the sixth. Half of those were duplicates. I spent something on the order of 40 hours screaming about this to superiors in memos and on the phone. As of this writing, we're down to four items a month from my own agency, but the duplicates remain. The computer does not do this; people do.

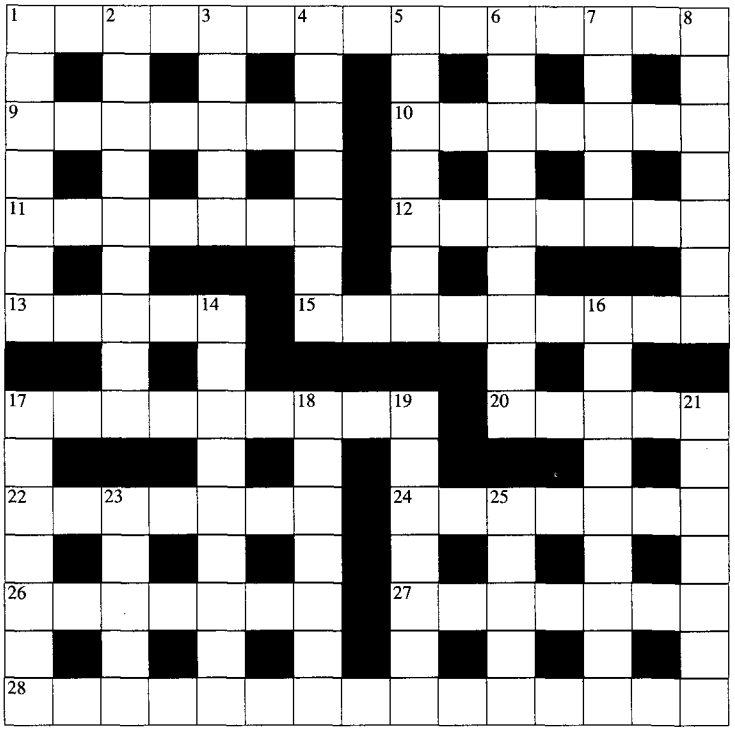
A bureaucrat's work must focus on the customers, which is to say the citizens. We don't serve citizens with voice mail relays that announce nothing. We don't serve them when our time is eaten up waiting for electronic connections. We don't serve them by stuffing mailboxes with duplicate publications. And, of course, it's also very difficult to serve them when the lights go out. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

POLITICAL PUZZLE

by John Barclay

The numbers indicate the number of letters and words, e.g. (2, 3) means a two-letter word followed by a three-letter word. Groups of letters, e.g. USA, are treated as one word.



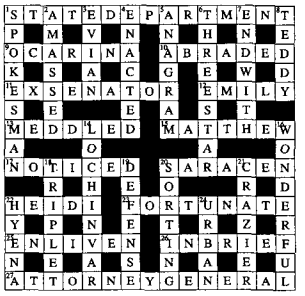
ACROSS

1. Neo-criminal moll performed at Washington site. (7, 8)
9. Recognized new television ad awe. (5, 2)
10. Sticker that made the list. (7)
11. Sometimes allies are tricky, *i.e.*, liars. (7)
12. Part of Africa revisited in a suit. (7)
13. Certain native found love in nice husband. (5)
15. Lost enthusiasm and controlled raid speed. (9)
17. Angry about Decree 6. (9)
20. Issues arising in system itself. (5)
22. To help oneself, display no pit identification. (3, 4)
24. Submits something bad about football players. (5, 2)
26. Strong wind slit arm badly. (7)
27. Improperly argue police department promotion. (7)
28. Wandering evil trolls cheat January 17 start. (15)

DOWN

1. War film screened for D.C. business establishment. (3, 4)
2. Born around five, before first rough Rome settlement, but not again. (9)
3. Nothing idle about rerun. (5)
4. Sloppy ink dot after start of note is unfriendly. (3, 4)
5. Tea sets collected for classes . . . (7)
6. . . . make tea tonier to set in place. (9)
7. Change it so a number of little things appear. (5)
8. Tie fish coming back to protected position. (7)
14. Running specially cool inn around Teddy. (2, 7)
16. Replace shabby last liner. (9)
17. Common and mined casually in European community. (7)
18. Disapprove uncontrolled law cost. (5, 2)
19. Challenge princess artfully set up. (7)
21. Reliable Rhode Island scene set. (7)
23. Mediterranean dish and former leader of Albania. (5)
25. Desert Gene cruelly before 5:00. (5)

Answers to last month's puzzle:



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

War Games

Why a meddling Congress doesn't always make the best Defense

by Admiral William J. Crowe Jr.

Congress has 110 new members. Many earned their seats in Washington by promising to attack wasteful government expenses—not the least of which are military outlays. Our defense budget, they said campaigning, should be driven by what's best for the country, not pork-barrel politics. No question, they're right, and I wish them the best of luck. But don't get your hopes up.

They, like the people they replaced, will soon learn that while logic dictates that the defense budget should be driven by national strategy, every incentive works against congressmen thinking of the big picture.

Congressmen might find it interesting to debate geopolitical strategy—whether, for example, Congress should approve of convoying Kuwaiti tankers. But actually recording votes on the subject is a risky proposition. In 1950, for example, we put Korea outside our defense perimeter, and look what happened. When a bad decision is made, those who vote for it are likely to be blamed, which means that congressmen generally shy away from policy decisions. Bad policy decisions can sweep you out of office faster than almost anything else.

For congressmen, thinking about the big picture can also mean shooting themselves in the foot. If a legislator argues that the American global situation suggests a smaller military, that might mean, for example, killing the A-12 program. Then everybody who wants the A-12 will say, "Wait a minute, I agreed with that strategy, but I didn't think that strategy meant no A-12." We all witnessed this phenomenon as Congress began drawing down the military in the wake of the Soviet demise. Radically cutting defense jobs during a recession is a painful business. Thus, the primary concern of the congressman from Detroit isn't the defense of the country, but how many jobs the Defense Department can give to Detroit and how well he can protect those jobs. Those considerations bring defense questions right into his backyard, where he can get his teeth into them. And he better, or they will come back to bite him.

Given that defense expenditures are so profoundly political, is there any way to inject more efficiency into the system? There

Admiral William J. Crowe Jr. was the 11th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (1985–1989). *Copyright © 1993 by Admiral William J. Crowe, Jr.* *From the forthcoming book* In the Line of Fire *by Admiral William J. Crowe Jr. to be published by Simon & Schuster Inc. Printed by permission.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is, but it will mean streamlining the relationship between Congress and the Defense Department.

Among the most counterproductive (and intensely aggravating) aspects of this relationship is the congressional proclivity to micromanage defense programs. Congress simply should not be involved in second-guessing every nut-and-bolt issue. It is neither proper nor effective for congressmen to tell the Pentagon that it should buy a 40/60 molybdenum-aluminum bolt rather than, say, a 20/80 molybdenum-aluminum bolt. But they regularly do, most often because a company in some congressman's district produces such a product and wants the order.

There are several culprits here. One is the spiraling growth of congressional staffs. The average senator's staff increased from six in 1975 to over 40 in 1985, and a representative's staff from three to eighteen. Large congressional staffs generate work. Their very numbers lead them to get involved in subjects that are not their business and that common sense would leave strictly to project managers.

As chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I found it depressing to contemplate the monumental amount of time and effort we put into satisfying Congress. If I believed we were actually influencing decisions or persuading people, I would not have begrudged the time. But the Pentagon files roughly 600 reports to Congress annually and answers 250,000 phone calls a year from it. I for one was never persuaded that the effort was worthwhile.

Whenever a congressional committee confronts a tough problem, most often because the political forces are too evenly divided, it directs the Pentagon to make a study, rather than admitting it cannot resolve the issue. "There are some extremely important questions here," runs the congressional rationale, "that have to be answered before we can deal with this question. So we think, Admiral, that it is necessary for Defense to conduct an in-depth study of the six points spelled out below and report back to us in nine months." Unspoken, though understood by all, is the fact that it may be politically easier to deal with the matter next year.

Normally, the study will provide little new insight. Of course, putting off a decision to a future date may on occasion be a wise strategy; perhaps the political forces will be aligned more favorably for a decision at some later time. But directing a study to justify the postponement is unconscionably burdensome for the Pentagon. The result is that the Pentagon spends an astounding portion of its time dealing with congressional requests, many of which are unnecessary, and almost all of which concern marginal projects. The huge expense foisted on the Defense Department in this fashion makes a $600 toilet seat seem prudence itself.

Tomahawk chop

To remedy this situation, the first priority is to reduce the size of congressional staffs. Second, Congress should resist the temptation to micromanage programs. It should consolidate the overlapping committees that oversee the Defense Department. (At present, three different committees in each chamber perform the same function—reviewing the defense budget.)

But if these often called–for reforms are put in place, Congress would still not be attending to its primary defense-related mandate: "To spell out," in the words of the Senate Armed Services Committee report, "major strategies and purposes." Unfortunately, that is not likely to happen anytime soon. Why not? Consider an exchange between Senator Sam Nunn and the then-secretary of Defense, Caspar Weinberger. Nunn pointed out that our national strategic requirements, as laid out by the Pentagon, essentially declared that the entire world is vital to our security. Clearly, we were not capable of defending such global interests with the military we had.

Weinberger's answer went something like this: Senator, I have no quarrel with that reasoning. Where do you want to cut back? Would you be amenable to cutting Israel out of the strategic interests of the United States? How about Saudi Arabia? We spend an awful lot of money on the Greek-Turkish area, Senator. Do you think we should defend Turkey or Greece? That would be a good place to save; why don't we cut them out of our strategic orbit and leave the eastern Mediterranean alone? Or perhaps we should forego Pakistan.

Congress's response to Weinberger's questions was usually: That's not our job, Mr. Secretary, it's yours. Congressmen will not draw the strategic lines, because doing so would alienate important constituencies. Strategic questions are almost always political, no matter who deals with them. Strategic questions are not usually resolved by the light of pure reason but by the lights of human beings who are by their nature political animals. What president wants to say, "I dismantled NATO"?

A good bureaucrat understands the political process and manipulates it ruthlessly. One of the best was a former secretary of the Navy, John Lehman, a man I had my run-ins with. Lehman understood the process, and he possessed an iron determination and a fine sense of timing to go along with his savvy. He had concluded before he was appointed secretary that the United States should have a 600-ship Navy, and by God we were going to have a 600-ship Navy. It was a simple vision, one that could rally support; it sounded good and it had sex appeal.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In terms of the political hopes he harbored at the time, he was not eager to be the man who took the Navy from 60 percent spare parts to 95 percent spare parts, or from 10 percent of the required Tomahawks to 40 percent. That would have been a tremendous accomplishment, but it would not have held much attraction for the folks back in Iowa who did not know nor care what a Tomahawk was. In the end, Lehman got almost all of his 600 ships, but they were not nearly as well provisioned and armed as we would have preferred.

Sure, Lehman scored a major coup, but it's the kind of victory that drives professional military men to distraction. The military can seldom get support for the mundane essentials it desperately needs. In all fairness, we had so much military funding under Reagan that we did get lots of those things. The massive expenditures of Reagan's first term allowed American forces to go into Saudi Arabia in 1990 in great shape. But even with an excess of funds, we were unable to build up the ammunition and parts inventories until we had made the sexy procurements: more tanks, more artillery, more planes—the big-ticket items that the politicians could get their hooks into. Congress, after all, has a difficult time taking future contingencies seriously, especially when there is no pressing political need for them to do so.

Because it is at heart a political process, military funding is not easily amenable to reform. Congressmen, by their very makeup and their most fundamental responsibilities, are going to make decisions in a political fashion rather than by logic or operational analyses. The plain talk about defense is that the process is fractious and messy. But at the same time, I am not so sure that in our complicated pluralistic society it can be any other way. □

The Washington Monthly JOURNALISM AWARDS

FOR DECEMBER 1992 ARE PRESENTED TO:

Ted Wendling and Dave Davis
The Cleveland *Plain Dealer*

With intensely personal stories of cancer patients who were killed by overdoses or misapplications of radiation therapy, Wendling and Davis chronicled two decades of neglect in the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) oversight of radiation oncology in the nation's hospitals. Although the NRC spends 95 percent of its time and money watching over nuclear power plants, the agency has virtually ignored its obligation to regulate civilian use of nuclear materials, especially in medicine. The NRC couldn't think of a single death resulting from improper radiation treatment; the newspaper found at least 40. The result? Listen to NRC Chairman Ivan Selin's reaction, after he promised to overhaul the agency's medical licensing and inspections: "If two reporters can work for a few months and come up with what you got, that's a pretty good indication that we're not doing our jobs." One promised reform: Full disclosure to patients and their families when overexposure occurs.

Ted Gup
Time

While the majority of media coverage of the crisis in America's inner cities chronicles the depth of the despair, *Time*'s Gup chose a different approach: Focus on a way out. Gup's detailed reporting takes us inside Washington, D.C.'s Malcolm X Elementary School.

There, Principal John Pannell leads a staff of 30 teachers, plus other staff and volunteers, who work to help kids escape the cycle of violence, and give students a sense of family they get nowhere else. When narcotics agent Earl C., a Malcolm X volunteer, arrested a woman for selling crack, he also took her children into his home for the six months of her rehabilitation. Last summer, Pannell took a group of students to the D.C. morgue to show them the ultimate result of drugs and violence. One child recognized a corpse with 11 bullet holes as a neighborhood acquaintance. More stories like "What Makes This School Work?" might encourage inner-city educators that theirs is not a lost cause.

The Monthly Journalism Award is presented each month to the best newspaper, magazine, television, or radio story (or series of stories) on our political system. Nominations for any newspaper, magazine, or radio or television station in the country are welcome. The subject can be government in its federal, state, or municipal manifestation. Please send nominations to Monthly Journalism Award, 1611 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20009. Two copies of the article or broadcast text should accompany the nomination.

Nominations for stories published or aired in March will close April 15. The winner will be announced in the June issue.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MEMO OF THE MONTH

PETER A. DEFAZIO
4TH DISTRICT, OREGON

INTERIOR AND INSULAR AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEES:
NATIONAL PARKS AND PUBLIC LANDS
WATER AND POWER RESOURCES
MINING AND NATURAL RESOURCES

PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSPORTATION
SUBCOMMITTEES:
AVIATION
SURFACE TRANSPORTATION

SELECT COMMITTEE ON AGING
SUBCOMMITTEE:
HUMAN SERVICES

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

PLEASE RESPOND TO:
WASHINGTON OFFICE:
☒ 1222 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFC. BLDG.
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-6416
DISTRICT OFFICES:
☐ 211 EAST 7TH AVENUE
EUGENE, OR 97401
(503) 465-6732
☐ 216 SOUTH 2D STREET
COOS BAY, OR 97420
(503) 269-2606
☐ 812 S.E. JACKSON ST.
SUITE 9
P.O. BOX 2460
ROSEBURG, OR 97470
(503) 440-3523

October 30, 1991

Representative Joe Barton
1225 Longworth H.O.B.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Joe:

You must feel a great sense of accomplishment with the passage of your amendment to the "Dire Emergency Supplemental" requiring the expenditure of $50,000 for the possible mandatory random drug testing of Members of Congress. There are some who say this was a cynical exercise on your part in an attempt to embarrass or intimidate your colleagues and demean the institution. Knowing that you are an honorable Member of Congress, I will not attribute such base motivations to you. In that spirit, I would like to offer to you and those who supported your amendment suggestions to improve your program.

Are you aware that alcohol is the most abused drug in America? That leaves an awful big loophole in your "emergency" legislation. Your amendment will not address alcohol abuse unless it is implemented on a no prior warning, 24-hour per day basis - perhaps linked to a "no knock" or "good faith exception" search and seizure provision as in the recently adopted "crime" bill.

Alternatively, an enhanced testing regime would get at the alcohol question. How about a million dollars or two for a voting card breathalyzer interlock system similar to that used on auto ignition systems?

I'd urge you to look at two additional tests in the same spirit that you proposed this test. First and foremost, you should recommend lie detector tests. Now I know that your administration found them unseemly when proposed for Justice Thomas, but don't let that stop you.

Finally and most importantly, I would recommend you lead the way by taking an I.Q. test.

Your Colleague,

Peter DeFazio, M.C.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Original Spin

How lurid sex fantasies gave us "America"

by Jack Hitt

When I was in Mrs. Poulnot's third grade class, history was taught in tableaux. Christopher Columbus was forever peering from a gunnel, crying "Land ho!" Amerigo Vespucci was eternally gazing at the stars, sextant in hand.

In the past year, many of us have had the Columbus tableau radically rearranged. Among other things, we now know that he was not the first to spy land. A simple seaman named Rodrigo de Tirana actually had that honor. Now, in my mind's eye, Columbus has stepped back from the bow; I see him down below, writing false log entries, mumbling to God and worrying himself mightily about whether Isabel would cheat him out of his payments—which she did.

Amid all this revision, one figure of this era has gone unexamined. Amerigo Vespucci remains the kindly mapmaker who lent his name to both continents of our hemisphere. I can remember asking Mrs. Poulnot: "What did he do that was so great? Why aren't we the United States of Columbia?" She thumped me on the head with her engagement ring and sent me to the principal's office.

The question still seems a good one to me, and I recently descended into Columbia University's stacks to find an answer. There was, I learned, a precise time and place when Amerigo's name become ours, and in the depths of Butler Library, I found the identity of the obscure man responsible for christening a third of the earth. It turns out that the tableau of Amerigo the mapmaker needs some tinkering, too. The story of our baptism is a glorious chain of mistakes so tawdry and preposterous that it is prophetically American.

Jack Hitt is currently writing a book about the medieval road to Santiago, Spain, for Poseidon Press. He is a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Despite the generous treatment he receives in third-grade history books, Amerigo the man was a dweeb. He was born into a family of great prominence and connections in 15th-century Florence (the model for Botticelli's "The Birth of Venus" was his cousin, Simonetta). All the advantages of an aristocratic birth notwithstanding, Amerigo was not one of the brighter lights of his class. In fact, he flunked. As was typical in those days and these, his parents procured Amerigo a sinecure, in this case working as a steward for a member of the notorious Italian banking family, Lorenzo di Pier Francesco de Medici.

By the time Columbus raised his sails, Amerigo had worked his way up to a plum posting in Seville, Spain, where he toiled for the Medicis as an accountant. But Amerigo, perhaps looking for a more fulfilling avocation, soon threw himself into collecting maps and books on cosmography and astronomy. Around the turn of the century, he contrived to sail on at least two voyages bound for the New World.

Amerigo served as mapmaker on these voyages tracing the coast of South America. In one harbor, he observed that the natives elevated their huts on pilings above the water and was reminded of Venice. On his map he wrote, "little Venice," or in Spanish, "Venezuela." On another occasion Amerigo entered a huge river during January. Plumbing the shallows of his imagination, he wrote in Portuguese, "Rio de Janeiro."

At this point in the story, the standard explanation in the grade-school textbooks starts to crumble. We all learned that Amerigo's maps launched his fame. But this was an era overwhelmed with cartography, and what was to distinguish Amerigo's maps was what accompanied them. After each of his voyages, Amerigo wrote long letters home: one to his employer, Lorenzo de Medici, and another to the political boss of Florence, Piero Soderini. These two letters represent our namesake's true legacy. Without them, this dull accountant would have disappeared into the vapors of history.

Goodbye, Columbus

Why didn't Mrs. Poulnot or the textbooks mention these letters? One has only to read them to understand. Amerigo's letters are delicious dispatches laced with wild adventures, bizarre events, and lewd encounters. They are outrageous even by the jaded standards of license we maintain today. But to truly appreciate the content of the letters, one has to realize that Amerigo didn't write them.

The originals have been lost. What we have are copies published on a then-newfangled machine called a printing press. These letters, by whatever path, found their way to the media of the day—printers who knew they could make good money peddling pamphlets crammed with fresh information about the New World.

These journalists lived during the infancy of the printing press, and their new technology was reshaping the Old World as rapidly as the computer has transformed our own. Venice, for example, employed 268 printers soon after Columbus departed.

At this time there was no First Amendment, no copyright law, and no tradition of authorship. These scurrilous, mercenary printers simply rewrote Amerigo's flat prose and exaggerated his plodding descriptions of the New World in an early stab at yellow journalism. Indeed, if hype has an origin, it may well be here in the letters of Amerigo Vespucci.

The most obvious evidence of the journalists' sloppy hand is in the reckless disregard for the facts. One transatlantic route, as written, would have sailed Amerigo across the belly of South America into the Pacific Ocean, somewhere near the Galapagos Islands. Another route would have plowed directly through the continental United States to Puget Sound, Washington. But the most compelling evidence is the occasional burst of lewd prose. Imagine your average squire in 1505 reading the following description of the randy savages of the New World:

> They do not practice marriage: Each man takes all the women he desires; and when he wishes to discard them, he repudiates them without discrediting himself or disgracing the woman; for in this the woman has as much liberty as the man. They are . . . excessively libidinous and the women much more than the men; for I refrain out of decency from telling of the art with which they gratify their immoderate lust.

And yet decency can't quite keep its tenuous hold on the author when the topic of wanton women comes up (and it frequently does). The reader learns that "the greatest mark of friendship which they show you is that they give you their wives and their daughters, and fathers and mothers feel highly honored when they bring you their daughter, even though she be a virgin, if you sleep with her." A few lines later, decorum again slips its slack tether to inform us that despite such orgies, the women maintain unnaturally tight bodies, especially where it counts:

> It was to us a matter of astonishment that none was to be seen among them who had a flabby breast, and those who had borne children were not to be distinguished from virgins by the shape and shrinking of the womb; and in the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

other parts of the body similar things were seen of which in the interest of modesty I make no mention. When they had the opportunity of copulating with Christians, urged by excessive lust, they defiled and prostituted themselves.

These rewrite men knew how to wield the plot device of invoking modesty and decency. The letters continuously resist—try to resist, then yield (and *yield*, baby) to descriptions of ruttish nymphs who want nothing more than a shameless romp with a European. It's a time honored technique still used by writers at *Penthouse* magazine: *I never thought it would happen to me, but one day some explorer buddies and I were hugging the coast of the New World when. . . .*

These journalists knew that a world of voluptuaries was not enough. Consider this twist on the usual travelogue entry on local cuisine: ". . . among other kinds of meat, human flesh is a common article of diet among them. Nay be the more assured of this fact because the father has already been seen to eat children and wife, and I knew a man whom I also spoke to who was reputed to have eaten more than 300 bodies." One also reads of a mother remorselessly impaling her newborn infant on a spit for a roasted snack, of a battle with a tribe of giant women, and of an encounter with a 150-year-old man.

By comparison, Columbus's epistolary oeuvre is tame. Columbus's letters did sell, but not nearly as well as the prurient Amerigo letters. One 1976 study counts 22 editions of Columbus's letters in the 35 years after he first sailed. Amerigo's editions add up to 60, making them the overwhelming bestsellers of the age.

Good sales do not name a hemisphere, but they help. As Amerigo's letters moved swiftly across Europe, one copy found its way into the possession of a fevered, poetic soul named Matthias Ringmann, who lived in a small French academic community. When Ringmann got a copy of the Amerigo letter to Soderini, the academy was beginning work on a grand edition of the most respected geography text of the day, Ptolemy's *Cosmographia*. With Ringmann's new material, the scholars decided to publish a separate introduction that would include not only Amerigo's letter, but an updated map of the world.

The map was drawn by Ringmann's friend Martin Waldseemüller, a noted cartographer. Remember the name. He's the man who named America (although only after a few late-night, heady chats with the giddy Ringmann). On this map are the crude outlines of the South American coast, an amputated chunk of North America, and a few of the Caribbean Islands. Beside Brazil, in Latin, Waldseemüller set in type, "I see no reason why we should not call it 'America,' that is to say, land of Americus, for Americus its discoverer, man of sagacious wit." Emblazoned across this new continental fragment, in capital letters, it reads: AMERICA.

If you like dates, hold April 25, 1507, in your heart. That is the day the presses rolled out Ringmann's book. Soon after publication, Ringmann died, and this was the only map with "America" on it for some time. Waldseemüller removed the name from his later versions. Perhaps he learned the truth. If he did, it didn't matter. "America" was the nom juste. With its muscular consonants and pleasing assonance, America sat comfortably alongside her peers, Asia, Africa, and Europa. When George Mercator applied the name to both continents on a map 31 years later in 1538, America was no longer a name but a place fixed firmly in the minds of Europeans.

Mr. Amerigo

Amerigo Vespucci warrants neither scorn nor praise. He died penniless, as did his friend Columbus. Amerigo won a fame as broad as can be had on this earth, and one appropriate to a world that was made new more by the printing press than by the discovery of distant lands. Guttenberg initiated an era marked by the swift collison of ideas, as good an epithet for America as there is.

Amid the primitive anarchy touched off by the debut of the printing press, the earliest editors found a way to get their readers' attention and thus created a lasting truth: Sex and violence sell. This maxim of the publishing industry has sustained it for five centuries and accounts for much of what you read today. Probably even this article.

In the intervening 500 years, history has tried to make Amerigo into either an esteemed explorer who made lasting contributions to cartography or a fraud who deliberately twisted the truth to snatch Columbus's fame. In a famous explosion of vitriol, Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote: "Strange . . . that broad America must wear the name of a thief. Amerigo Vespucci, the pickledealer at Seville . . . whose highest naval rank was boatswain's mate in an expedition that never sailed, managed in this lying world to supplant Columbus and baptize half the earth with his own dishonest name."

How difficult it is to accept that behind the facade of our tidy narratives rages the aimless human circus. Amerigo's fame was not earned but thrust upon him by techniques as old as typeface and no different than those used to sell a Bruce Willis movie or a Tom Clancy novel. America was not baptized in the honest sweat of labor, but in the maddening confusion of hype. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Voting Wrongs

You think minorities and Republicans won in redistricting? Think again

by Jon Meacham

North Carolina's new 12th congressional district was conceived, appropriately, during a brief political tryst at an interstate motel. One day in 1991, Thomas Hardaway, a Democratic state representative, met with John Merritt, an aide to incumbent Democratic Rep. Charlie Rose, at a Howard Johnson's off Interstate 95 in Gold Rock, North Carolina.

The purpose of the rendezvous? To plot how to draw majority-black congressional districts without jeopardizing existing Democratic districts. "I guess it was kind of funny, meeting like that," Hardaway says. The resulting district, the 12th, is equally amusing, or at least equally bizarre: It runs along three interstates, has a perimeter of 907 miles and is, in places, only as wide as the road. A majority-black seat now held by a black freshman Democrat, the district toddles and twists 141 miles across the state, connecting clusters of racial minorities in four major cities. The district respects no county lines, no city limits, no test of common sense.

Welcome to the new world of racial gerrymandering. What made the North Carolina district possible—and others like it in Georgia, Texas, Illinois, Florida, New York, and elsewhere—was the partisan manipulation of the relatively obscure Voting Rights Act of 1982. Originally intended to guarantee Southern blacks the right to vote, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was amended in 1982 to give racial and ethnic minorities the right to "elect representatives of their choice." The amendment presumes that those representatives of choice would belong to the same racial or ethnic group: Blacks would want black congressmen; hispanics, hispanic congressmen.

Although passed by Congress 10 years ago, the 1982 law affected its first congressional election in 1992, after the once-a-decade redrawing of districts. And, ironically, the initial signs are that the newly gerrymandered districts may actually hurt those who most eagerly lobbied for them: minorities and Republicans.

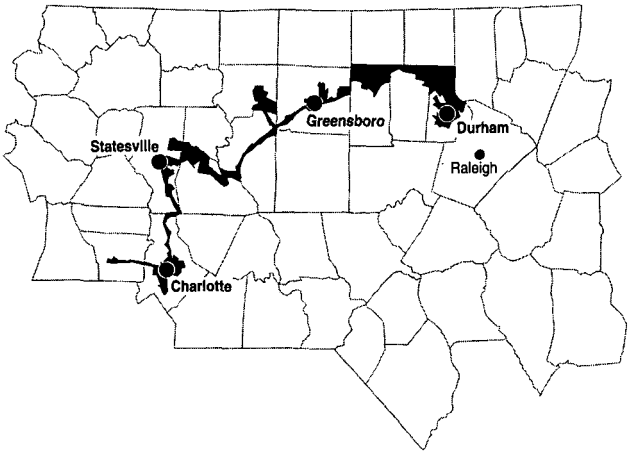
The good news for minorities is that historic numbers of black and hispanic representatives were elected to Congress (58 minority representatives, 52 of whom are from majority-minority districts, up from 38 minority representatives in 1990). In that light, the 1982 amendment seems a fine, bipartisan piece of legislation. But while there may be a greater number of minorities in Congress, it's also true that minorities are now in a more tenuous position. A minority voter in a majority-minority district—virtually all of which are heavily Democratic—has no real choice to make between the two major parties. Democrats are the only players on the field.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And a minority congressman, once in Washington, has few common points of interest with the representatives of neighboring, snowy-white districts. This state of affairs is no accident. During reapportionment, Republicans decided to press for minority districts, figuring (correctly) that quarantining minority voters would necessarily create competitive districts next door.

"For us, it was sort of, 'What the hell, let's maximize our suburban base,' " says Tony Snow, who was Bush's deputy assistant for media affairs. Minorities, as a result, are exiled to political reservations and given a few voices in Congress, while white Democrats and Republicans represent overwhelmingly white districts.

This means that one casualty of the 1982 law's enforcement could be, ironically, the particular concerns of the *minority* community. Says Clarence Carter, director of African-American political affairs for the Republican National Committee (RNC) in 1992, "It's intractable, really: The Republicans have found it expedient to wall us off, and the Democrats take us for granted." There's a national element to all this as well: People don't vote for a presidential candidate because of who their congressman is, but political coalitions and alliances begin at that level. The Republicans have given up, and the Democrats are coasting on old loyalties. Think back to the fall campaign: Did Bush appeal for minority votes? Did Clinton embrace a minority agenda? The answer is no on both counts.



Graphic: *The Raleigh News & Observer*

North Carolina's 12th Congressional District: Take a right at the gas station, left onto the highway, get off at exit 24 . . .

As for the Republicans, gerrymandering led to short term gains, allowing them to net 10 new GOP U.S. House seats nationwide; in the 13 states where new majority-minority districts were created, Republicans picked up 12 seats. (Only one of those Republicans, an hispanic, is from a majority-minority district—one based in the heavily Republican community of Cuban-Americans in south Florida.) But the new districts also led to increased Democratic voter turnout—a turnout which, without question, helped the Democrats capture the White House. "As much or more than Clinton, the reason for the additional black turnout was due to the new minority districts, both congressional and state legislative," says David Bositis, a senior research analyst at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. "You're talking about new districts, new candidates, new excitement—it really churned the pot."

Of course, in some places, majority-minority districts are required in order to send a minority to Congress. It's also true, however, that such districts can be drawn without meandering around existing districts, creating grotesquely shaped legislative inventions. Where majority-minority districts are geographically compact—in Memphis, for example, or in Rep. John Lewis's Atlanta district—it's unfair to question their logic or, in a race-conscious time, their necessity.

But the headlong quest for high numerical majorities undermines traditional notions of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

representation and ignores examples of minority candidates (California Rep. Ron Dellums and Missouri Rep. Alan Wheat come to mind) who win in districts where minorities don't make up overwhelming percentages. In fact, in 1991, before reapportionment, 40 percent of the black representatives in Congress were elected from non-majority-black districts. Certainly, these are exceptions to the rule of minimal minority political success, but they prove that minority candidates are competitive in political arenas that aren't racially gerrymandered out of all proportion.

Caught mapping

Who's to blame? The better question is, who isn't? "It's hard to put white hats on the Democrats or the Republicans," says Laughlin McDonald, a lawyer who runs the American Civil Liberties Union's Southern Voting Rights Act Project. Just look at the North Carolina district, or at the one in Georgia that meanders from Atlanta to the sea, or at the one in New York where a majority-hispanic district wanders from Manhattan to Brooklyn to Queens. These districts weren't created to give minorities a break; they were grudgingly drawn by Democrats to preserve as much of the status quo as possible. And Republicans hoped to pack as many minorities into districts as could conceivably fit.

The result was a wild redrawing of congressional district maps. In the past two years, the 1982 Voting Rights Act was chiefly enforced in 13 states with high percentages of minorities, and in the Southern states, where there has been a pattern of racial discrimination: Alabama, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia. While the Democratically-controlled state legislatures drew up the plans, the federal Justice Department could, in nine of the states, review any laws affecting reapportionment. If Justice thought the plans failed to maximize a minority candidate's chances of getting elected, it would reject them.

There was another way Republicans and minority activists could get around Democratic legislatures. If there was a Republican governor with veto power (as in California and Alabama), the governor could nix the Democratic legislature's plans and send the process to court. Even without a GOP governor, the Republicans filed lawsuits claiming reapportionment was at an impasse. To convince the courts that more minority districts (and consequently, more competitive districts for Republicans) were possible, the GOP drew alternative maps. That way, the courts or Justice, acting under the 1982 Voting Rights Act, could force recalcitrant legislatures to draw the new majority-minority districts—or do it for them.

Consider North Carolina, where racial gerrymandering hit a new low. Early in the process, the Democratic legislature (the governor, in a quirk of law, has no veto) drew one majority-black district in the eastern part of the state. Because of population growth, North Carolina had picked up a congressional seat, and the legislature's first plan conceded the new district to the Republicans. As the plan went to the Justice Department for review, a Republican state legislator introduced an alternative, proposing a second majority-minority district—one that stretched from the middle of the state to the Atlantic coast. It combined blacks and Native Americans, therefore not guaranteeing that a black would be elected, but giving blacks significant influence. Not coincidentally, the GOP proposal would have sucked Democratic voters out of three incumbent Democrats' districts. Justice, in rejecting the first plan, expressed an interest in what the Republicans had drawn; the Democrats then realized that Justice would accept oddly designed districts to satisfy the majority-minority edict.

That's the point at which Hardaway and Merritt had their reapportionment meeting at the Howard Johnson's. But partisan motives produced distorted districts—in places, one side of the interstate is in one district, and the other side is in the 12th. It's not a community; it's a demographically pure enclave.

In Georgia, where the legislature first met on reapportionment in August of 1991, the state GOP chairman said it would be "an abdication of (the legislature's) responsibility" not to draw as many majority-black districts as possible. Because of the rapid growth of the Republican-leaning Atlanta suburbs in the eighties, the state had already picked up a new congressional seat; at this point, the only Republican in the state's 10-member delegation was Newt Gingrich.

Over the next eight months, the Justice Department would reject three separate Georgia congressional plans passed by an overwhelmingly Democratic legislature. Georgians for Fair Redistricting, a nonprofit corporation monitoring reapportionment and supported by the Republicans, eventually filed suit, claiming that the legislature would be unable to do the job in time for the May qualifying deadlines for state and federal offices. The courts, the group argued, should now step in. It was a clever move that was repeated across the country. In Georgia, as elsewhere, the prospect of having Reagan-Bush federal judges shaping the map terrified Democratic lawmakers. With that threat looming over the Georgia

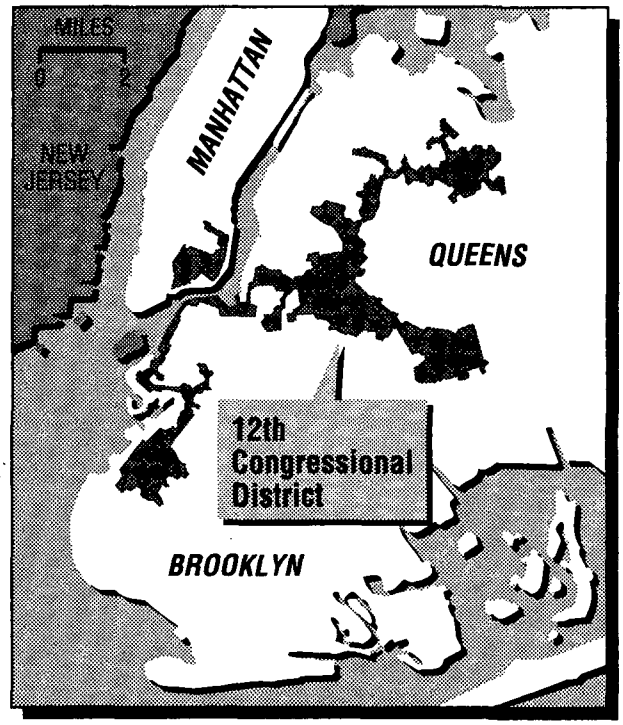
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

legislature, the leadership broke down and drew a third majority-black district, siphoning Democratic voters out of other districts. Justice finally agreed, ending the matter before the federal court deadline.

The result was the election of two new black representatives and three new GOP congressmen. "I think the outcome was very, very good," says Don Hill, a consultant to the Georgia GOP.

But the Republican victories came at a heavy price: Black turnout was up 34 percent in Georgia in 1992, where blacks make up a quarter of the electorate. Eighty-eight thousand more black voters turned out in 1992 than had in 1988; Clinton's margin of victory in the state was 16,000 votes. With Clinton making headway in the suburbs, Bush lost, and the black vote made the difference.

In a suburban Atlanta district where a freshman Republican narrowly won, blacks were cut away to boost minority percentages in the huge majority-black 11th Congressional District, which picks up voters in three different cities from Atlanta to Savannah—kind of a second Sherman's march. In middle Georgia, the requirement for a majority-black district cost a white incumbent his political base, helping elect a freshman Republican in his place. The Democrats rightly feared that removing key blocs of minority voters from majority-white districts would put Democrats at risk.



Graphic: *The Wall Street Journal*

Those white Democrats who did win are decidedly centrist, even conservative. Michael Thurmond, a state representative who was head of the Legislative Black Caucus during reapportionment, opposed the final plan, believing it put race ahead of a traditional liberal agenda. "That's what people haven't seen yet," says Thurmond. "The question is, did we really win? The only whites that can get elected are very conservative, whether Democrat or Republican. Consequently, while you get more minorities elected, you get fewer progressive votes in the delegation as a whole." That's one of the critical consequences of racial redistricting: Will minority representatives become lonely voices for traditionally liberal causes now that neighboring representatives have so little political stake in explicitly racial issues? What happened in Georgia's delegation could happen elsewhere.

At bottom, politics ought to be about building consensus and offering legitimate choices. That's not happening now in either of the major parties. "There are more and more Democrats who know that the Clinton strategy will work," says Bositis of the Joint Center. "As long as you don't mind killing a few black men on death row or insulting Sister Souljah or appearing to have a tiff with Jesse Jackson, you'll do well, and you'll get the black vote anyway." It doesn't help that the 1982 amendment makes race a prerequisite in some elections. Civil rights supporters argue that participation in government is necessary to bringing minorities into the political mainstream.

But neither party accepted that fundamental premise during reapportionment. It instead was a matter of playing strategic games to maximize partisan advantage. "The most egregious maps, the ones that make you intuitively say something's wrong with this, were drawn by Democrats trying to hold on to what they had," says Ben Ginsberg, the RNC's chief counsel and principal enforcer of the Voting Rights Act strategy. In many states, the facts bear Ginsberg out. The problem is that criticism comes from a party that opposes preferential policies in hiring, contracting, and all other arenas of political life. Voting rights seem to be a different thing entirely.

From 1990 to 1992, the first year under the new congressional map, the percentage of blacks represented by Republicans in Congress dropped. In North Carolina, for instance, the average in 1990 was 15 percent; now, of the four districts held by Republi-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cans, the black population makes up an average of 5.7 percent. In Democratic districts that aren't majority-minority, the average hovers from 20 to 25 percent. Nationally, according to Election Data Services, districts held by Republicans in 1990 were 6.84 percent black; in 1993, the average is 5.56 percent.

If the Republicans don't think this is trouble, they only have to look to the Democrats' history since 1968, when Democrats cut themselves off from segments of the white middle-class electorate, taking politically suicidal stands on things like welfare or, as in 1988, on the Massachusetts prison furlough system. Then, in 1992, Clinton got it right. He acknowledged that welfare needed reform, and he was sufficiently tough on crime to dull that perennial wedge issue. But those are sensible stands anyway. Even out of political context, it's a good idea to end dependency on welfare, and there's nothing wrong with locking up bad guys.

By the same token then, Republicans would not be selling out by being fair to blacks and hispanics (and whites, for that matter) caught in poverty or in discriminatory situations. The political problem will only get worse: Minorities will make up 30 percent of the nation's population within 10 years. "Republicans just assume the minority vote can't be gotten," says Bill Brock, the former RNC chairman who rebuilt the party after its 1976 defeat. "That's crazy. There are a very substantial number of minority Americans who are worried about taxes and crime and education and would be receptive to our views on those things. I think a lot of the Republicans, just like the Democrats, wallowed in hypocrisy on the Voting Rights Act. They used it to divide and segment and segregate. I just think we're wrong on this."

Racially gerrymandered districts amount to political ghettos, and even strategists and sponsors with the largest stake in the 1982 amendment are increasingly ambivalent about it. The 1982 version runs until 2007 and controls redistrictings for city councils, judicial districts, and other local offices. "There is a point of diminishing return, when minority districts are so packed that minority influence is dramatically cut in other districts," says Texas Rep. Craig Washington, who represents a majority-minority district. "I start from the premise that the Voting Rights Act is intended to empower voters, not elected officials. The bottom line ought to be which candidate will best represent his constituents' concerns." That's a notion whose time never came in racial reapportionment. And the losers may well be the far-flung minority pockets that got caught between Republican dreams, incumbent ambitions, and a law that sent district lines cavorting down the interstate. □

One reason those White House phones didn't get answered the week after the Inauguration was that the **Clinton** transition team had asked that all the White House secretaries be fired. Veteran observers were shocked that the Clintonites would repeat a mistake made in recent years only by the **Reagan** team in 1981. Usually, even when there's a change of party in the White House, smart bosses realize the value of keeping smart secretaries on board. . . .

Who's Who has never heard so many How Could You's as we've been assailed with since the publication of the item about **Laura Tyson** having caught **Bill Clinton**'s eye. The item was not intended to convey that anything more had happened or that Tyson had sought to use her physical charm to attract the president's attention. Indeed, from all we hear, she is one of the more original intellects in his administration and deserves Clinton's attention strictly on the basis of merit. But we do want to make it clear to the new president that we intend to fire a shot across his bow whenever we see his eye wandering. Such preventive gossip might have spared **John Kennedy** the perilous predicaments produced by his own wandering eye. Will we strike each time a good-looking woman comes into Clinton's view? No. Only when there are ocular vibrations or other unmistakable manifestations of interest. . . .

Hillary Rodham Clinton's two brothers tried to hustle major corporations to pay for their Inaugural party. Defending the propriety of this approach, **Hugh Rodham** told *The Wall Street Journal*, "We obviously need to pay for it somehow.". . .

That friendly looking, reddish faced, bald fellow sitting just behind **Bill Clinton**'s right shoulder at the Inauguration was **Taylor Branch**, author of *Parting the Waters*, the prize winning account of **Martin Luther King**'s early years, and an early editor of this magazine. What was he doing there with the likes of **Jimmy Carter** and **Tip O'Neill**? We decided to launch an investigation and discovered that the briefcase you saw between his feet had brought to the platform Clinton's speech on which Branch had labored along with **Michael Waldman**, **David Kusnet**, and the president-elect himself during 20 of the preceding 24 hours. Branch and Clinton have been friends since they worked together on the McGovern campaign in Texas in 1972. . . .

It may not be surprising that **Bill Clinton**'s cabinet is dominated by lawyers—although it is bad news for the cause of legal reform—but did you know that it is also full of rich people? Those who are or almost are millionaires of cabinet status include **Lloyd**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WHO'S WHO

Bentsen, Warren Christopher, Hazel O'Leary, Madeleine Albright, Robert Reich, Richard Riley, Ron Brown, Jesse Brown, Henry Cisneros, Mickey Kantor, and **Bruce Babbitt**. . . .

As of early February, **Betsey Wright,** a close associate of the **Clintons** for more than 20 years, had not been given a position in the new administration. One reason is that, next to **Susan Thomases,** she was considered least likely to win the Ms. Congeniality Award from her colleagues on the campaign. Another is that after **Michael Kinsley** had devastated the Bush campaign for falsely reporting that Clinton had raised taxes 128 times as governor, it was Wright who triumphantly proclaimed, "It was only 127." But insiders say she is sure to get a good position soon because she knows too much to be left outside the tent. . . .

If you think **Les Aspin** is going to lead a great crusade against excessive military spending, consider an article by **John Mintz** that was recently buried in the business section of *The Washington Post.* Headlined "Defense Industry Voices Support for Aspin," it said top military industry executives believe Aspin "may be the only man who can save them." Veteran observers here wonder if **Clinton** understands the full extent of Aspin's ability to manipulate the press. The only Aspin-related article in recent memory that didn't come from him or his staff was the one about his having gotten a free junket on an Air Force plane for his girlfriend. . . .

Richard Holbrooke, a former assistant secretary of State under **Jimmy Carter,** campaigned hard to become a member of **Warren Christopher's** team at State—too hard, some say, for Christopher, who declined to give Holbrooke the top job he sought. . . .

Howard Fineman, *Newsweek*'s leading Washington correspondent, lobbied **Bill** and **Hillary** to send **Chelsea** to Sidwell Friends, according to **Howard Kurtz** of *The Washington Post.* Where did the lobbying take place? Among the "we're all just friends" atmosphere of the Renaissance Weekend at Hilton Head, South Carolina. This is causing a lot of head-shaking among veteran journalists who remember the days of **Hildy Johnson** and **Walter Burns,** when reporters were blue-collar types who couldn't dream of attending a Renaissance Weekend or of sending their kids to an elite private school. . . .

A quote that has inspired anxiety among local liberals comes from **Thomas McLarty,** the new White House chief of staff who describes himself as "in step with **Bill Clinton** and probably more in step with a **Sam Nunn** or that type philosophy." . . .

Maybe **Zoë Baird** *was* telling the truth when she said she couldn't get citizens or legal immigrants to work for her. But we hear that before hiring the Peruvians, she interviewed an American graduate student, who asked for more money than the Baird-Gewirtz family offered to pay. "Look around you," Baird explained, sitting in the elegant living room of her home on New Haven's exclusive St. Ronan Street, "It costs a lot to keep up a place like this.". . .

The speculation around town is that it was **C. Boyden Gray** who prodded **William Barr** to appoint an independent counsel to investigate the **Clinton** passport scandal. His alleged objective: to tarnish the reputation of his old enemy, **James Baker**. . . .

Democrats, who had hoped **Colin Powell** was a closet liberal and who have been disappointed by his recent opposition to gays, military reform, and his obvious disenchantment with Clinton, received another blow when Powell announced during a recent speech that **Ronald Reagan** was his hero. . . .

Clark Clifford's lawyers have been arguing that he is too ill to be tried in New York but well enough to endure a trial in Washington. Cynics suggest that this position just might be related to the fact that the New York case against Clifford is strong while the one in Washington is relatively weak. Now, just as we are going to press, Clifford's lawyers, apparently having decided that the courts will agree with the cynics, are trying a new tactic: They say Clifford must undergo surgery the very day the New York trial is scheduled to commence. . . .

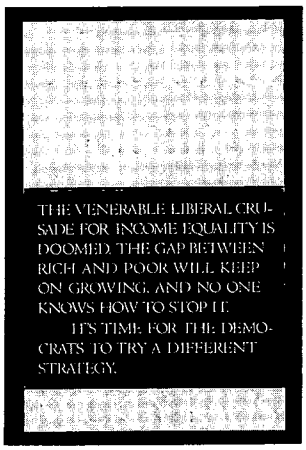
Harold M. Ickes Jr. was slated to become deputy chief of staff at the White House until his appointment was derailed by reports that he may have lied to federal prosecutors during an investigation of Mayor **David Dinkins,** and that he had represented the allegedly corrupt Local 100 of the Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union. Ickes was supposed to be Clinton's disciplinarian, a job which has now gone unfilled. . . .

The only member of the **Clinton** team who hit the ground with most of his subordinates in place was **George Stephanopoulos.** In fact, he has so many policy-oriented aides such as **David Kusnet, Ricki Seidman, Robert Boorstin,** and **Michael Waldman,** that White House officials with direct policy responsibility are wondering why the communications director needs these sorts of people around him. Is there a chance, they wonder, that Stephanopoulos may move into their territory?. . .

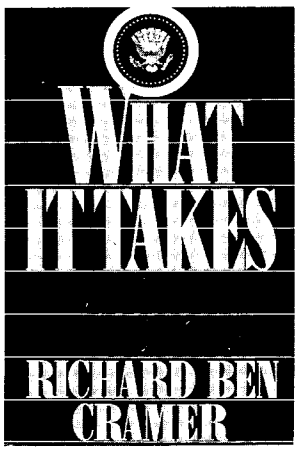
—*Susan Threadgill*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The 1992 Political Book Awards



1st Prize



Mickey Kaus
The End of Equality

Richard Ben Cramer
What It Takes

Honorable Mention

Truman
By David McCullough

Kissinger
By Walter Isaacson

JFK: Reckless Youth
By Nigel Hamilton

Reinventing Government
By David Osborne and Ted Gaebler

The Rascal King
By Jack Beatty

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Beat the Press

Death threats and bullying tactics follow AIDS journalists who contradict the conventional wisdom

by Leslie Kaufman

Soon after *Newsday* published a book review by Michael Fumento, the newspaper's book editor, Jack Schwartz, began receiving anonymous phone calls late at night. Nasty calls. "They made a lot of threats," Schwartz recalls, "not the least of which was death." The calls came seven or eight a night for a month. It was clear very few of the callers had actually read the review, says Schwartz. "What outraged these people was not the content of the review, which was very even-handed," he says, "but that we allowed this guy to write anything at all." The issue was Michael Fumento himself.

Schwartz wasn't exactly surprised by the abuse. An editor of the now-defunct New York gay publication *Outweek* had previously made clear to him that Fumento was persona non grata, and that giving him a forum would carry serious consequences. Not long after the review appeared, Schwartz was "zapped." That is, his name and phone number were published in large, bold type in *Outweek*. The angry commentary that accompanied the number and invited readers to share their rage with Schwartz ran: "Why the fuck would *Newsday* have such a hate-filled, untalented, lying loser review important books?"

Who *is* Michael Fumento? He is perhaps the most politically incorrect AIDS writer in America. The title of his 1990 book says it all: *The Myth of Heterosexual AIDS*. In it, he theorizes that despite dire predictions in the media, AIDS will not devastate white middle-class heterosexuals as it has homosexuals and poor minorities. The core of his thesis runs as follows:

> The myth of heterosexual AIDS consists of a series of myths, one of which *is not* that heterosexuals don't get AIDS. They

Leslie Kaufman is an assistant editor at Government Executive Magazine.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

certainly do get it, from shared needles, from transfusions, from clotting factor which hemophiliacs use to control internal bleeding, from their mothers at or before birth, and sometimes through sexual intercourse with persons in these categories and with bisexuals. The primary myth, however, was that the disease was no longer anchored to these risk groups but was in fact going from heterosexual to heterosexual to heterosexual through intercourse, that it was epidemic among non-drug abusing heterosexuals.

Fumento's theories on the spread of AIDS aren't ones you commonly hear, but they are not off the medical charts. The *Journal of the American Medical Association* called Fumento's book "thoroughly researched, poignantly written, and a must read for anyone interested in learning the dynamics of the HIV epidemic or health care planning." Dr. James Enstrom, a respected epidemiologist at UCLA who asked at first to speak anonymously because he feared retribution, said Fumento hit the nail on the head when he described "how the disease has been warped out of all proportions to how it occurs in society." Even *The Advocate*, a newspaper aimed at homosexual readers, wrote, "Look, the guy is a pig . . . But that doesn't mean he is wrong about the spread of AIDS."

Fumento is certainly not the only AIDS writer who has been harassed for having an unpalatable point of view. Others, such as Gina Kolata of *The New York Times* and Daniel Lynch of *The Albany Times Union*, have also been singled out for harassment by AIDS activists. But Fumento's story is a particularly vivid illustration of just how effective the extremes have been in controlling the bounds of acceptable discourse on AIDS.

Fumento is no right-wing gay-bashing crusader, but his theories have policy implications that strike at the core of the AIDS activist agenda. *Myth* has a chapter entitled, "The AIDS Lobby: Are We Giving It Too Much Money?" In it, Fumento implies that the government should pare back what it spends on AIDS research—about $2 billion in fiscal 1992—and start an educational campaign that explicitly describes the special dangers of anal sex in spreading AIDS. He mocks government-funded "sex-equals-death" campaigns which depict low-risk, straight, white people in their ads. Fumento's work is so focused on the outrages perpetrated on the public by the AIDS-research publicity machine that he often seems indifferent to the plight of those who are actually dying of the disease. But his lack of sensitivity (or even compassion) is no reason to dismiss his views. Even if Fumento offends personally, he is someone who belongs in our national debate on AIDS.

Unfortunately, as Jack Schwartz learned the hard way, not everyone can agree to disagree. Even before Fumento published his book he had become the target of AIDS activists. They have repeatedly attempted to silence him, often by resorting to violent intimidation, and they have almost succeeded. While the personal harm inflicted on Fumento by his opponents is in itself an injustice, his tale offers an equally sobering lesson about the politics of AIDS: that some sectors of the news media and publishing industry have given in to pressure from activists for fear of being branded the unenlightened accomplices of anti-gay conservatives.

Branding a heretic

In 1987, Fumento, then a legal affairs reporter for *The Washington Times*, wrote an article for *Commentary* magazine in which he dared to challenge the widespread notion that AIDS was the next bubonic plague. The numbers coming out of the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, he said, were being widely misinterpreted and the spread of AIDS exaggerated. Not surprisingly, the story was ignored by the mainstream media. In 1987, reputable outlets from *U.S. News & World Report* to the normally stoic *Atlantic* were busy predicting an AIDS apocalypse. Needless to say, more popular tabloid journalists had also embraced the worst case scenario with a passion. In early 1987, Oprah Winfrey opened her show with these words: "Hello everybody. AIDS has both sexes running scared. Research studies now project that one in five—listen to me, hard to believe—one in five heterosexuals could be dead of AIDS in the next three years."

Fumento's piece, however, caught the attention of right-wingers who helped get him appointed to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights as an AIDS specialist. But it wasn't long before Fumento showed how, in trying to be honest about AIDS, he offended everyone. On the commission, he realized that conservatives were using the new epidemic to further an old political agenda: prayer in schools, chastity (rather than sex) education, and anti-homosexual legislation. Just months after taking the job, he exposed these designs in an article for *The New Republic*, detailing the many ways in which the political ends of the Reagan administration were directly at odds with a rational response to containing the disease. The Civil Rights Commission promptly searched his office, demoted him to researcher (civil servants are hard to fire), and ordered him not to speak to the press.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Having alienated his natural allies, Fumento left the Civil Rights Commission to turn his articles on AIDS into a book. But he was just beginning to feel the heat. Fumento and his agent, Glen Hartley, began looking for a publisher and soon ran into trouble. "We began hearing back about a number of controversial meetings at publishing houses," remembers Hartley. "One friend characterized the discussion in-house as being 'heated.'" Another editor friend wrote Hartley, "Fumento makes good points, but I am not convinced that the cause of curing AIDS—for those who have it or are prey to it—is best served by publishing this in book form."

Eventually, New Republic Books, a subdivision of Basic Books and HarperCollins, agreed to publish the book. By this time, Fumento's magazine articles, including one in *The American Spectator* called "The Incredible Shrinking AIDS Epidemic," had attracted the attention of AIDS activists. Well before the book was published, Bill Newlin, Fumento's editor at New Republic Books, got his hands on an angry letter from the owners of a gay bookstore to other book stores and to big chains, demanding that they refuse to carry the book.

The fact remains that *The Myth of Heterosexual AIDS* is impossible to find today. HarperCollins doesn't even have back copies.

There were other indications that *Myth* would provoke a violent reaction. In June 1989, *Forbes* magazine ran a short piece on Fumento's controversial views. The article was written by Joe Queenan, known mostly for humor writing, and had a light, irreverent tone. Like this article, it was more concerned with the backlash against Fumento than evaluating the merits of his views on AIDS.

Two days after the magazine hit the newsstands, 40 Act-Up activists stormed *Forbes*. The leaders of the contingent entered the office of Malcolm Forbes, who promptly gave in to their demands. Forbes told the activists he had been out of town and had not seen the story before it was published. (Both Queenan and an Act-Up activist who worked at *Forbes* at the time say Forbes's statement was untrue.) In the next issue, Forbes published a lengthy, lightly edited response from Act-Up explaining why Fumento's views were "dangerous" and his own editors were "irresponsible." In an introduction to the statement, Forbes added, "In the case of Michael Fumento's speculations in a forthcoming book, *The Myth of Heterosexual AIDS*, I find his views asinine."

Queenan was so furious at how *Forbes* handled the Fumento story that he left the magazine a few months later. He is still seething. "Hearing the words 'Mike Fumento' is like hearing the words 'Kent State.' It just brings back nothing but bad memories," he says.

When *The Myth of Heterosexual AIDS* was finally published in 1990, it got off to an auspicious start. It received fairly favorable reviews, something of a surprise considering its politically incorrect content. *The New York Times Book Review*, for example, called it "legitimate and soundly reasoned." Of course, *Myth* was also drumming up the kind of controversy book publicists dream of. Fumento made appearances on the "Today" show, "Sonya Live," and "Donahue," where the father of daytime talk hawked the book. "Do you know what that means?" says Hartley. "When Donahue does that with your book, you could sell 20,000 to 50,000 additional books in the next weeks."

But Fumento's book didn't sell 50,000 or even 20,000 copies. In fact, it sold about 12,000. What went wrong? Hartley and Fumento believe it was sabotaged from the top of the line on down. The huge Waldenbooks chain didn't order any copies of *Myth*. Mike Ferrari, Walden's buyer, is reputed to have told representatives selling the book that he didn't want it for political reasons. (Fumento concedes that Waldenbooks did eventually place an order for the book—but only after he singled them out during an appearance on C-Span.)

The biggest blow to Fumento came when Basic decided not to reprint the book and didn't tell him until there were so few copies in stock that even the book's publicist, Lois Shapiro, had run out. The decision was uncharacteristic of Basic, which has a reputation for keeping books in print even when back-orders for them are low. Moreover, there was every reason to believe that *Myth* would continue to have an audience. There had been intense foreign interest —major magazines in Germany and Australia had run cover stories on Fumento, as had many London papers—and the book was certainly causing a stir in the United States. Martin Kessler, the editor of Basic Books, gave Hartley his justification: "The reps [who sell the books to buyers] refuse to carry it."

Of course, Fumento and Hartley's charges can't be proved. HarperCollins says it did its best for the book, and Shapiro points out that it had a much larger publicity budget than most. But the fact remains that *The Myth of Heterosexual AIDS* is impossible to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

find today. HarperCollins doesn't even have back copies. (For this story, Fumento sent me a copy of the book he photocopied himself.) Ultimately, the fate of *Myth* is best explained by the very orthodoxies that it sought to expose. Asked why the book didn't sell well, Clinton Morris, the Basic representative who sold to Waldenbooks in New York, says, "Look, it was going against everything we know about AIDS, against anything anybody who was reputable was telling us. Why buy a book like that?"

Acting up

Of course, not everything Fumento has published on the topic has provoked an activist backlash. For example, his piece in this magazine ["Technical Foul: Not even Magic can change the facts about AIDS," December 1992], a review of Earvin "Magic" Johnson's *What You Can Do to Avoid AIDS*, drew no direct response from Act-Up. (Fumento theorizes that only magazines with circulations above 100,000 or so are singled out; the circulation of *The Washington Monthly* is approximately 30,000.) But considering that plenty of truly homophobic and pseudo-scientific books on AIDS sell like hotcakes—*The AIDS Cover-Up*, for example, which advocates quarantining HIV-positive individuals, has sold 230,000 copies—the obvious question is why a thoughtful writer like Fumento has been singled out for retribution. Unfortunately, the question points to the answer: It is precisely because his arguments are legitimate that Michael Fumento is a threat. The proof of this supposition is in the company Fumento keeps.

Gina Kolata, a science writer for *The New York Times*, found herself the target of a vicious campaign in 1990 after she wrote a story describing why many health care professionals objected to the liberalized distribution of experimental AIDS drugs. Bumper stickers appeared on *Times* boxes throughout New York saying, "GINA KOLATA OF THE NEW YORK TIMES IS THE WORST AIDS REPORTER IN AMERICA." Act-Up members called Kolata's editors *and* her colleagues at other newspapers to complain that she was incompetent. Kolata also received several hundred angry, threatening Christmas cards at her home, again courtesy of Act-Up.

Kolata is more reflective than indignant about her experiences, saying that the intimidation is primarily psychological and poses no physical threat. Besides, she argues that Act-Up is so splintered these days that it's not much cause for concern. Fumento, who has never actually received a death threat himself, seconds Kolata's assessment. "They save death threats for people who they think they can scare," he says. Even Queenan admits, "They gave me death threats. But these weren't FBI death threats, these were bullshit death threats. They would call me and say 'Don't turn on your car this morning,' and I don't have a car."

On the other hand, Kolata's obituary for Act-Up and other AIDS advocacy groups may be premature. They remain committed to silencing journalists they disagree with. Just ask *The Albany Times Union*'s Lynch, who writes a weekly column on the media. Last spring, he was amazed by a Gallup poll showing that Americans identified AIDS as the greatest health threat to the country. Since AIDS was the number 11 killer in America that year—behind cancer, diabetes, and even liver disease—Lynch suggested that the media had exaggerated the threat. *Washington Journalism Review* and *Cosmopolitan* carried reprints of the column.

An anonymous note branding Lynch a homophobe appeared on the bulletin board at his newspaper. As a guest on a local talk radio program, he was besieged by hostile and sometimes violent callers. A major advertiser—a car dealer—called the newspaper and demanded that Lynch's column be pulled. And, of course, he received a truckload of less than solicitous mail. Lynch, a veteran of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and *Newsday*, says that in all his years in journalism he "never got this kind of response."

It is increasingly true that journalists who write heretically about AIDS will face some kind of retribution. Writers seldom risk physical harm, but the harassment and the threats are disincentive enough. Any journalist seriously thinking of tackling AIDS or another hot-button issue would have to consider the cautionary tale of Michael Fumento. After his book was published, Fumento was summarily fired from his job as an editorial writer at Denver's *Rocky Mountain News* and spent two years unemployed. He is routinely called a racist and a homophobe in print. And when he speaks on college campuses, he is mau-maued by angry protesters. At the beginning of last year he got hired again by the *Investor's Business Daily* on the condition he wouldn't write about AIDS.

Of course, Fumento does occasionally write freelance pieces on AIDS. He has also just finished a new book, *Science Under Siege*, which he bills as "a serious counter-argument to the media claims about technological threats to human health and the environment." Like *Myth*, it is a challenge to medical orthodoxies. Fumento's attraction to this kind of confrontational story has led many of his colleagues to conveniently dismiss him as a trouble-seeker. While that may be true, challenging half-baked conventional wisdom is supposed to be the media's job. If the marketplace of ideas becomes so unsafe that only our pit bulls do that job, we all lose. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What Clinton Could Learn from the Catastrophic Health Care Catastrophe

In the debris of a failed bill, some pivotal pointers for making national health care happen

by Greg Monfils

Of the myriad health care plans being Fed-Exed and faxed to Bill Clinton's policy experts, the one that may serve them best has already failed: the 1988 Medicare Catastrophic Coverage Act. That's not because we need catastrophic care insurance any more than universal coverage, but because the catastrophic care bill's tortured collapse can provide the new administration with a road map of exactly what to avoid in tackling the tougher task of overhauling the entire health care system.

On the universal list of Good Ideas That Bombed, the catastrophic care act ranks near the top. Designed to protect elders from the financial and mental trauma of ever-growing medical fees, the bill was enacted by Congress and signed by President Reagan with grand expectations. But within a few months, it came under sure attack from geriatric rabble-rousers who believed they were getting a raw deal. The pressure worked: Congress, fearing the wrath of hoards of angry, politically active seniors, repealed the act, ending, for all practical purposes, the effort to provide seniors with security against the exorbitant costs of long-term or debilitating illness. In the years since, Congress and the executive branch, both badly burned by the episode, have made virtually no effort to revive catastrophic care.

The biggest losers in the fiasco were, of course, the nation's 31 million seniors. But there is a silver lining if we are smart enough to see it: The debacle shows us how to avoid the same mistakes in trying to create and pass legislation to fulfill another important reform, universal health care for all.

The lessons of catastrophic care legislation begin with how the bill failed. The story begins

Greg Monfils is an Oakland, California, writer.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in 1986, when Republicans lost control of the Senate after the Reagan administration attempted to reduce cost-of-living adjustments on Social Security benefits. Chastened by the experience, Reagan and Republican congressional leaders moved to recapture the "compassion agenda" by extending an olive branch to the elderly.

Enter then-secretary of Health and Human Services Otis Bowen. Bowen's wife had spent the last three months of her life in a hospital with terminal bone cancer. That experience introduced him to the plight of many elderly couples who, although entitled to Medicare benefits, were often left destitute after a serious illness. Because Medicare automatically reduces payments after 60 days of hospital care and eliminates them entirely after 90 days, the only way elders were able to protect themselves financially in the event of long-term hospitalization was to purchase "Medigap" insurance to fill in the gaps where Medicare leaves off. Bowen thus urged Reagan to address the problem of major hospital costs incurred after 60 days. This was key not only because long stays often bankrupted seniors, but because the possibility of facing such financial trauma was a burden in itself. The President backed Bowen's agenda, but with a major caveat: No taxes could be raised to finance the plan.

Bowen's plan called for an extension of benefits financed by a mandatory, flat rate annual premium of $59 assessed against all Medicare enrollees. In return, beneficiaries would enjoy 100 percent coverage for treatment of serious illness after a $2,000 per year deductible. A few Democrats thanked Bowen and Reagan for their proposal, but also realized that they had been upstaged in the eyes of the powerful seniors' bloc. The Democrats also noted that the flat rate was regressive, forcing a disproportionate share of the burden upon the elderly poor for whom the $2,000 deductible created an already catastrophic burden.

Thus the Democrats disparaged the Bowen proposal and, egged on by the seniors' lobby, claimed that a new, more expansive plan was needed. It wasn't long before a compassion-fest erupted in Washington, with now the White House, now Congress, now the White House claiming that we, not they, had the interests of the elderly at heart. A good concept was slowly ballooning out of control.

On July 1, 1988, Reagan signed the Medicare Catastrophic Coverage Act—the biggest expansion of Medicare since its introduction in 1965. The final version provided all seniors with: full coverage for hospital stays of any length after a $560 deductible for hospital costs and a $1,370 deductible for doctor bills; 80 percent of prescription drug costs after a $600 deductible; 150 days of skilled nursing care; 38 days of home health care; and 80 hours of respite care to ease the burden on family members caring for disabled elderly, among other benefits.

Gray matter

But all these goodies had to be paid for somehow. Congress' solution was to replace Bowen's flat rate premium with a "supplemental premium." All Medicare recipients who earned enough to pay more than $150 a year in federal income tax would be required to pay a special 15 percent surtax, capped at $800 per person. In short, the poorest seniors would pay nothing and the wealthiest would pay the most. People earning under $25,000 a year would pay about $58 a year for catastrophic coverage; those earning about $40,000 would be required to put in $400 a year; and those in the highest income brackets would pay the maximum $800—clearly a far cry from the $59 tax called for in the original Bowen plan. Aside from the elderly rich, there was another set of losers—those who were already receiving Medigap insurance free as part of their pensions, namely retired federal employees, teachers, and union members.

Such groups clearly had a legitimate gripe. Asking upper income seniors to pay perhaps $100 or $200 more than poorer counterparts for equal coverage was one thing. But to ask them to put up $700 or $800 a year while others were paying absolutely nothing was demanding a bit much. The same holds true for the retired federal employees and union members. Sacrifice by some for the good of all—whether to create catastrophic insurance or universal insurance—is necessary, but that sacrifice must be *reasonable*. And herein lies lesson number one for the Clinton administration: Regardless of the plan Clinton adopts for national health care reform, there will be those who will seek to use it to gain political points, turning a smart idea into sloppy legislation.

Of course, compromise will be necessary, but there is a real distinction between a plan driven by the nation's health care needs and one driven by political gamesmanship. With a Democrat in the White House and a Democratic Congress, it will be tempting to fall into the same Santa Claus mode of the framers of the catastrophic care act. Inevitably, some will benefit less from health care reform than others. In the case of national health care reform, they are likely to be overpaid doctors, hospitals that overbill, and bloated insurance companies. But unlike the framers of the catastrophic care act, the writers of universal care legislation should remember that a good bill is also a fair one.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Not long after the catastrophic care bill became law, the media, with the help of some seniors' lobbies, quickly shifted its attention to the losers under the new legislation. A collective gasp could be heard in Congress as Democrats considered how they had alienated perhaps the most politically active segment of the older American population.

Geezer displeaser

It is here that the odious National Committee to Preserve Social Security & Medicare (NCPSS&M), the Conservative Caucus and other lobbies of their ilk slink into view. As Paul Hewitt of the National Taxpayers Union explains, "Whipping up the elderly is a billion-dollar industry." Indeed, many seniors' lobbies looked upon the complex, front-loaded, not entirely adequate act as just the sort of legislation that could be easily misrepresented for profit. And so, the NCPSS&M sent fliers to its 5.5 million members, 97 percent of whom voted in the previous election, urging them to help fund the campaign against the "Seniors Only Income Tax Increase."

In short time, both the Conservative Caucus and the United Seniors of America also targeted millions of seniors through their own direct mail campaigns asking for donations to help fight the act. Within weeks Congress was inundated with more than 2 million letters and thousands of phone calls from elderly citizens condemning Congress for passing the bill. Senator John McCain pointed to 20,000 letters, 10 of which were in support of the act. It was reported that one Congressman's mother so berated her son over the matter that he refused to take her calls.

By the fall of 1988, House and Senate members started backpedaling—not on the benefits, of course, as this would only further incite the special interests—but just on the financing. Instead of attacking the problem at its root, which would have meant showing the courage to peel back some of the overloaded benefits, and thus eliminating the need for unfair financing methods, Congress had taken the easy way out and simply upped the tax rates. This brings us to lesson number two for the Clinton administration and the new Congress: Special interests such as doctors and insurance companies will continue to fight tooth and nail to protect their wallets against health care reform. The easy way out will be to appease them. Doctors may not like the fact that health care reform means they'll have to hold onto their Volvo a couple more years before buying that Jaguar, but that's not a valid reason to buckle to their demands.

As important as remaining wary of the well-connected will be remaining mindful of the least organized, who are also most in need; namely, the 37 million Americans without health insurance. When the catastrophic care act was repealed, the soft voice of the elderly poor was, not surprisingly, drowned out by their wealthier counterparts. Only strong political leadership could have prevented this.

Simply stated, the people most likely to benefit from the act, the elderly poor and the spouses of the elderly ill, lacked the financial wherewithal to effectively voice their concerns. This, combined with the fact that they do not vote as dependably as their more affluent contemporaries, made them a lower priority in the eyes of many lawmakers. The effort by Congress and the Bush administration to defend the act on behalf of these people proved to be laughably inadequate. At first, seniors nationwide received pamphlets filled with all but indecipherable bureaucratese describing the complex components of the act. What's more, there were no longer any defenders with enough visibility or credibility to stop the repeal effort. Senator Claude Pepper, the great defender of the elderly, had died, Reagan was gone, and President Bush didn't lift a finger to save the act.

That's a mistake Clinton cannot afford to make —which provides the third and most important lesson: While both Reagan and Bush supported the plan, neither made it his mission to sell it to the American people. Clinton—not a Cabinet secretary, not leaders of Congress—must step forward to speak for the millions most in need. If Clinton uses his presidential bully pulpit to emphasize the need for doctors, hospitals and insurers to make a legitimate sacrifice in income so that the nation is not bankrupted by health care costs, he may not win over the American Medical Association, but at least Congress and the rest of the country will be encouraged to stand up to it. Then, when patients get an earful from their doctors about how they'll suffer from health care reform, they'll be ready to fight back.

For Clinton, this may mean returning to town meetings, Larry King, and the radio talk shows he used so effectively during the campaign. Perhaps it means calling a "health care summit," or even relying on the more traditional, but still powerful, tools of the presidency, like the State of the Union Address. (One role model is Franklin Roosevelt, who was noted for going over the head of Congress, straight to the American people, to push his agenda when necessary.) The exact method matters less than the message. Clinton has shown skill in connecting with the people, which should make selling the nation on his health care reform plan more a matter of will than ability. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Debt 101

Our system now saddles students with loans that make low-paying but meaningful work impossible. Here's how to fix it

by John Heilemann

Since its debut the night before the Clinton inauguration, Fox television's new baby-buster series "Class of '96" has been called a lot of things—many flattering, some critical, even a few unprintable in a family magazine. But no one seems to have noticed that "Class of '96" is, incidentally, a legacy of the Great Society. Not that the show's treatment of campus life is especially liberal or PC. Instead, it's that "Class of '96" owes its plausibility to an idea hatched by Lyndon Johnson in 1965: federally subsidized college loans.

The predictably pimple-free characters that populate Havenhurst, the ersatz Ivy League school where the show is set, don't all hail from "Beverly Hills 90210." The hero is working-class Irish; another is a poor, black Brooklynite; others are resolutely middle class. If their fictional financial aid files ever get opened on the air, you can bet student loans will be there in abundance. And for the real-life counterparts of students like these, government-guaranteed student loan programs are essential to paying for private and public universities alike.

According to the College Scholarship Service, the average student today finishes school $10,000 in debt. For graduate students, the figure is a crushing $35,000. This level of indebtedness among young adults is unprecedented in American history. Indeed, for all the media hubbub about twenty-somethings, the one thing that really sets them apart from their elders isn't Nirvana or lumberjack shirts, but coming out of college deep in hock. Forget Generation X. Call them Generation Debt.

There is sad irony in this. The loans which once promised to open doors for young people have instead ended up trapping them inside what *Generation X* author Doug Coupland calls "Student Loan Prison." Having taken the money to pay for a degree, students are frequently forced to make a bitter compromise: They must, after college, give up doing socially useful but ill-paid work, like teaching or public-interest law, and settle for uninspiring jobs that bring in enough to cover hefty monthly loan payments. For others (usually the less well-off), the fear of Student Loan Prison has them thinking twice about going to college at all.

Fortunately, there's a straightforward way of reforming the student–loan system that will make it more efficient, more accessible, and less punitive to those who want to chase their ideals before jumping on the fast track. And Bill Clinton knows all about it. But trouble looms. The interests with a stake in keeping the current system are circling, and Clinton's simple idea for fixing the loan program is bound up with his entirely admirable—but infinitely more complicated—plan for a sweeping national

John Heilemann is the acting Washington bureau chief of The Economist.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

service scheme. There's a simpler way to fix the problem, whether national service ever comes to pass or not.

Just as higher education has become more and more necessary, it has also become less and less affordable. Between 1980 and 1990 the cost of attending the average college soared by an astonishing 126 percent—way ahead of inflation and, more importantly, way ahead of median family income. With college costs skyrocketing, families have turned increasingly to the government to keep up. Where loans once accounted for 15 percent of the total student-aid budget, they now make up fully half of it. In part, that's because middle class kids who once counted on mom and dad to foot the bill are now lining up for loans. Meanwhile, for poorer kids, grants are tougher to get, and grant levels have not kept pace with rising education costs.

Thus, federally guaranteed student loans—also known as Staffords—have become the bread-and-butter of student aid. In 1980, the government loaned out around $6 billion in Staffords; in 1992, the figure was $14.6 billion. More than a third of all students today take out such loans. And that's only at the federal level: These same students and millions of others also borrow from state governments and individual colleges. No doubt most are grateful. In the absence of alternatives, low-interest loans are often the most sensible—and sometimes the only—way to get hold of the costly keys that open so many doors of opportunity. And to the extent that student loans have helped millions of young Americans do just that, they have been a success.

But that success has come at a price not easily measured in dollars and cents. Take Carl Botterud, who graduated last year from Whittier College of Law in California. Botterud had thought about doing public-interest law; then, after contemplating his $50,000 debt—or $600 a month—he thought again. Many public-interest attorneys earn about $25,000 a year, if that. Now he's working for a mid-sized law firm in Los Angeles for $48,000 a year.

Such stories are typical among the members of Generation Debt. Forget working as a doctor at a free clinic in Anacostia; or heading to Central America for Catholic Relief Services; or working as a house painter while you write a book of poetry; or starting a program like Teach for America. With any of these jobs, you'll be in default before you can say "slacker."

There's no question that some who claim to lust for virtuous work are using their debt as an excuse to go off and get rich. But some are sincere: the law student or soon-to-be Wall Streeter who really *does* plan to quit after a few years of paying down debts and go teach high school. But even the most well-intentioned souls become acculturated. The fat paychecks come; all your friends are getting them, too. The career ladder beckons, then there's the new house and with it mortgage payments that dwarf the loan payments—and on and on.

Sallie mayhem

Although the fear of Student Loan Prison dramatically influences career choices, it has also scared some middle class families away from higher education altogether. Joseph Harrigan, an Ohio ironworker with a daughter who recently came out of Fordham Law School $40,000 in debt, told *The Washington Post* last year that "a lot of people think that you'd be ahead if you bought a house instead. You can come out of graduate school owing $35,000 and not get a job. I'm beginning to wonder if they're not right."

So are a lot of families less well-off than Harrigan's. According to a Carnegie Endowment study, huge loan debts are increasingly forcing many poorer students to forget about going to college. Financial worries have also led to a trend toward educational "buying down." Kenneth Green of the UCLA Higher Education Research Institute says, "Students who would have gone full time are going part time. Students who would have gone to four-year colleges are going to two-year colleges. And more students from poor homes go to vocational schools instead of colleges." Indeed, vocational schools—schools of cosmetology, drafting, barbering, air-conditioner repair and the like—have thrived on the flood of student-loan money that has poured out of Washington in the eighties and nineties.

And these trade schools—4,000 strong across the country—attract students who, because they are poorer, have a harder time paying back the loans. Students from such schools are about four times as likely to default on their loans as others, the Department of Education has found. In 1982, the government had to pay out $300 million to banks, which administer loans for the government for a fee, to cover students who had failed to pay up. By last year, the total had climbed to $2.9 billion—$700 million more than the program's other major cost, the interest subsidy.

Meanwhile, as students pile up debt and taxpayers shell out bigger and bigger sums to help them do so, one group is getting really rich: the country's banks, led by Citicorp and Chase, and the Student Loan Marketing Association (Sallie Mae). To them, student defaults matter not a bit. Their handsome profits are guaranteed. In fact, the Department of Education reports that student loans are more profitable for banks than almost every other kind of debt (except for that generated by credit cards and industrial

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

loans). Last year they collectively made more than $1 billion from the student-loan racket. To the banks, defaults just mean they see this money sooner rather than later.

Sallie Mae has reaped its rewards as well. Set up as a federally chartered corporation by President Nixon, Sallie Mae buys student loans from banks and then resells the debt to investors. Currently, Sallie Mae owns about 5 million such loans, or a third of the total outstanding. Yet for a quasi-governmental agency, Sallie Mae has bosses who pay themselves like princes of the private sector. The General Accounting Office says that Lawrence Hough, Sallie Mae's president, paid himself more than $2 million in 1991. His deputy got $1.7 million. Jack Anderson recently reported that even the fifth man on Sallie Mae's totem pole earns more than twice what the president of the United States is paid.

Audacious Sallie Maestros, burgeoning default costs, the travails of Generation Debt—no wonder Bill Clinton wants to scrap the whole system and start over again. Originally, Clinton said his plan would revolve around three things. First, he would cut banks (and Sallie Mae?) out of the picture, making loans directly to students through their schools and collecting repayments through the IRS. Second, students would pay loans back at rates that vary with their incomes. Third, students could repay all or part of their loans by taking part in a national service program.

Already, it's clear that because of the deficit, Clinton is backing away from a grand scale national service plan. That's too bad. As this magazine has argued for years, national service is a noble and attainable goal. But the problems Clinton is having with it shouldn't blind him to the need to fix the student loan system anyway. And it is here, happily, that he already has many of the right ideas.

Clinton has suggested using the IRS, either by collecting the payments along with income tax returns or by withholding the right amount from people's paychecks. This way, students wouldn't have to send out checks each month to a handful of notoriously indifferent lenders. Better still, the new system would slice the $3 billion a year in defaults by at least a third, thinks Illinois Senator Paul Simon.

What would Clinton do with these savings? In the past, he has talked about offering college loans to anyone, regardless of family income. But so long as loan reform goes forward without the national service scheme, he should leave eligibility alone: Under the program's lenient rules most of the middle class already qualifies, and America can hardly afford to be pointlessly generous to the rich. What might make sense is raising the amount that students can borrow, though Clinton says he worries about subsidizing tuition hikes. In this he sounds like William Bennett, who used to say similar things when he was secretary of education. But Bennett and Clinton are wrong. Tuition hikes have become obscene, but they started long after the loan boom did, and they continued long after loan levels stopped rising to keep pace.

Aid nauseum

Even so, Clinton may well need those savings to finance the most important aspect of loan reform: letting students pay back their loans at different rates depending on how much they earn after graduation. Critics of the idea say that with many graduates paying less than they otherwise would, it might take years to reach the point where there was enough money coming in to cover new loans. They also say it would be an administrative nightmare, pointing to a failed experiment with income-contingent loans at Yale in the seventies.

But, according to Yale's director of financial aid, that program failed because it proved difficult to get hold of the students' tax returns. Having the IRS collect repayments would solve that. As for the costs, it's certainly true that it might take some years before the program broke even. But it is not breaking even now. By letting students pay according to how much they make, an income-contingent plan would probably do as much as the IRS to end defaults. As a National Commission on Responsibilities for Financing Postsecondary Education report, which advocates the idea, points out, most graduates who default do so because they just can't make the payments on their salaries. With appropriately tailored repayment schedules, that problem would all but disappear. Yes, some people would pay their loans back very, very slowly, maybe into their fifties and even sixties. But few would fail to pay at all.

Even if income contingent payment plans ended up costing as much (or a bit more) than the current system it would still be worth doing. Why? For a start, there is the matter of fairness. On its face there is something absurd about asking two people with the same amount of student debt, one a social worker and the other a corporate lawyer, to repay the same amount each month.

But, most importantly, such a change would turn student loans back into what they were intended to be: a means of liberating young people. For many poorer students, knowing that those debts will not crush them could mean the difference between going or not going to college. For many others, undergraduates and graduates alike, it would mean opening up a world of options rather than closing them down. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sign It, Then Mind It

Until Washington tends to the details, good ideas—even Clinton's—will keep flopping

by Christopher Georges

Ross Perot recently asked me for $15. Against my better judgment, I'm sending him a check. I did not vote for Perot. I hope he never becomes president. Even so, he earned my contribution based on a single remark midway through the second presidential debate. "Please understand," he said, "there are great plans lying all over Washington that nobody ever properly executes."

If the Clinton administration takes one lesson from Ross Perot, that should be it. It's no secret that the new president has more programs than Microsoft. Many are smart. Some are desperately needed. But most will surely follow the same failed path as the ones they are intended to replace—unless the Clinton administration pays heed to more than just turning good ideas into laws. Just as important is focusing equal attention on the nuts and bolts of how to *make the plans work* on the ground level.

Let's face it, policy implementation is boring. It's complex, and it makes terrible TV. But it's also the missing gene of American politics. Few people focus on it; even fewer care. But getting it right is especially relevant now as Washington gears up to push Clinton's brash new agenda. "All the pious announcements, all the laws that are passed will mean nothing," explains Richard Nathan, director of the Rockefeller Institute of Government at the State University of New York at Albany, "unless there is a commitment to carrying them out. Our failure to do this has been *the* endemic problem of American government."

And what exactly does that mean? It's no secret that countless plans, whether under Johnson or Reagan, in areas from crime to welfare, have failed to live up to their promise. Little matter that the best policy minds designed them, that ambitious new laws were passed, that billions were funneled to federal agencies and the states. Inevitably, it seems,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

our social ills have become worse. And when that happens, it's back to the drawing board to try a newer, better plan.

The assumption here is that the solutions—the laws themselves—are flawed. And in some cases that surely is part of the problem. But lawmakers and policy designers rarely stop to consider whether, for example, police officials charged with implementing the latest federal plan for community policing know how to train officers for the task, or whether welfare caseworkers actually sanction welfare recipients who fail to take job training classes, as the latest welfare law requires. In short, when the laws are written, is there enough thought given to how to implement the new policies?

In a word, no. Why not? Presidents and congressmen earn their stripes by passing legislation, not by making sure it works. To the constituents back home, a new law sends a signal that their man in Washington is on the ball, doing something —anything—to solve a problem. To the media, slavishly covering the signing of a new bill—as they did in broadcasting images of President Reagan's White House signing of the the 1982 Garn-St. Germain Act, which helped cause the savings and loan disaster—is easy. Schlepping out to the hustings, on the other hand, to decipher the impact of the law on the banking industry, wasn't. About the only ones who seem to pay any attention at all to the implementation gap are professor-filled, blue-ribbon panels. (Foremost among them in recent years have been the 1990 Volker Commission on Public Service, the 1992 National Commission on State and Local Public Service, and a Brookings Institution team that is expected to release its review this summer.) Many have gone to great pains to illustrate that even the best laws will fail when implementation is ignored. Such warnings, however, seem to fall on deaf ears.

Of course, all politicians want their laws to succeed, but there is little incentive while designing new legislation to worry about the fine points of how it will be carried out. Unfortunately, it may take the failure of Clinton's vaunted agenda to prove the point. That's a particularly unsavory notion these days, as policy flops in the nineties will be more costly than those of the past. Considering the need to slash the deficit, we simply can no longer afford to play loosy-goosy with social programs; every penny spent must be producing tangible results. Just as important, further failures will push public confidence to the brink: How many times can Washington spend billions on reforms and then have nothing to show for them before taxpayers abandon faith in government solutions altogether?

There is, however, an easier way than waiting for the bright new agenda to become a wasted one: looking back to the causes of failed laws. Two areas, crime and welfare—where fully debated, smartly designed policy ideas in recent years failed—make the case.

Disorganized crime

No issue was hotter in the 1968 election than crime. In the three years leading up to the election, the nation had been bled by riots in more than 100 cities. A 1968 Gallup poll revealed that most Americans believed lawlessness was America's number one domestic problem. After months of debate and with the input of special task forces comprised of the brightest stars in the field, Congress and the Johnson administration unveiled the 1968 Safe Streets Act. The cure to the crime problem would start with the creation of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA), through which $300 million in grants would be doled out to police departments across the nation. In order to win the grants, however, localities had to promise to use the money to fund crime prevention programs that the think-tank task forces had endorsed, namely plans like community-based policing, drug treatment on demand, hiring more police officers, and school-based drug education. Sound familiar? If you've followed Clinton's $3 billion crime program, it should. Of course, Clinton's plan is not identical (he's also pushing tougher ideas like boot camps for juvenile offenders), but the overlap is significant.

The bad news for Clinton is that the Safe Streets Act and the LEAA were dismal failures. (The LEAA, after a controversial, sorry existence, was abolished in 1982.) The good news, however, is that the failure had almost nothing to do with the quality of the policies proposed. In fact, libraries full of studies since 1982 have concluded that such reforms can, and have, worked—which helps explain why they're back on the agenda.

Instead, the failure was largely a product of how the act was carried out. Under Safe Streets, local police departments would submit funding proposals to "state planning boards," which would modify them as they saw fit and pass them along to the Washington-based LEAA for approval. If the plans contained the types of programs Congress and the administration had endorsed, the money would be released to the state boards, which would then dole it out to the local police units.

Of course, fighting crime, as the Safe Streets Act properly recognized, should intimately involve—and ultimately be controlled by—local governments, and not micromanaged from Washington. But Safe Streets'

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Promises, Promises...

The Washington Monthly promises to show President Clinton—and you—how he can keep his promises.

While the rest of the media is busy telling you what's wrong with the new presidency, The Washington Monthly is offering ground-breaking, practical **solutions** to problems Clinton **promised** to solve during the campaign, such as:

- ➢ integrating gays in the military.
- ➢ adopting a health care system that works for everyone.
- ➢ cutting the deficit fairly and reasonably.
- ➢ reforming the legal system.
- ➢ keeping university costs down by cutting bureaucrats instead of shutting out students.

". . . must reading in the White House, on Capitol Hill, and elsewhere in the government."

–Time

For those citizens hoping to change Washington, "Editor Charles Peters can point the way."

–Sam Donaldson

SUBSCRIBE NOW AND SAVE!

☐ YES! Enter my subscription for a full year (10 issues) to *The Washington Monthly* for only $26.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

☐ Payment enclosed ☐ Bill me later

Charge my ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard

Credit card # _____ Exp. _____

The Washington Monthly
Box 587
Mount Morris, IL 61054

For Canadian and other foreign subscriptions add $7. Please remit U.S. funds.

A3301

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LEAA made a crucial blunder. It essentially threw the money at the states and the state planning boards. It cared only about who got what amount of money. When it came to considering whether the money was being used properly, and more importantly, what results the funding was producing, it was essentially hands off.

And how did that play out in towns and cities across America (where few Washington bureaucrats care to look)? For one, the state planning boards—made up for the most part of academics who were sold on the reforms—invariably locked horns with local police officials, blue-collar types who were often set in their ways. To the local officials, many of whom were quite comfortable running their local fiefdoms, the pointy-headed planners were perceived as a threat to their autonomy. Massachusetts's state planning board, made up mostly of liberal Harvard types, not surprisingly found itself slugging it out with the street-wise Boston police. "Morale here is zero," one Massachusetts state planner told the press in the early seventies. "We have no friends, no political base, no power." One southern state planner at the time said, "The police chiefs in this state come out of the Salem witch hunt. If a police chief doesn't want a training program, you can't do anything about it."

"All the pious announcements, all the laws that are passed will mean nothing," explains Richard Nathan, director of the Rockefeller Institute of Government, "unless there is a commitment to carrying them out."

It wasn't long before the agenda began to unravel. While some local departments never applied for funds, others did and then used the money as they saw fit. In 1970, 37 percent of the LEAA funds had been used to pay for programs completely unrelated to crime. (The governor of Indiana, for example, dipped into the LEAA trough to buy himself an airplane.) And in 1971, it was later discovered that more than a dozen states had used LEAA funds for illegal purposes. "What had appeared to be a law officer's dream for badly needed help," stated a congressional report examining the LEAA in the mid-seventies, "was becoming merely a politician's dream for the biggest pork barrel of them all."

Even when the money did filter down to the local level, the new-fangled ideas were often resisted by local police officials wedded to their ways. Consider the Georgia sheriffs who, after a plan had been approved, refused to allow their local jails to be replaced by a multi-county prison slated as a model in providing the latest in rehabilitative programs. Why the stubbornness? To the sheriffs, local jails offered status, provided free labor when needed, and in many cases allowed them to put their wives on the county payrolls to cook meals for the inmates.

In the end, the local police simply beat the planners to a pulp. They were better organized and more politically connected. Linked by vocal, visible, and well-funded groups such as the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the American Correctional Association, they rolled over the friendless and politically unsophisticated planning agencies.

And what was Washington doing during the meltdown? "Their biggest concern was to get the money out in the field," explained one state planning official to the authors of *U.S. v. Crime in the Streets*, a late seventies study of the the failure of the Safe Streets Act. "It's as if the people there held an amoral attitude about program standards—they just wanted to get the money out into the hands of the police." Federal myopia meant chaos ruled. Nevada's crime program, for example, failed to include an organized crime component. New York's had just one page detailing how it would deal with the state's drug problem (whereas Vermont's included 320 pages on the same problem). None of this seemed to matter to the LEAA, which approved the plans all the same.

Equally damaging was the fact that evaluation from the LEAA was virtually nonexistent. By the mid-seventies, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the General Accounting Office, and the White House had all concluded independently that the LEAA was in a fog. One 1976 OMB report criticized the LEAA for paying for millions of dollars

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

worth of "interesting but unnecessary equipment." In fact, it wasn't until four years after the LEAA was created that Congress made the embarrassing discovery that the agency had not a single employee charged with collecting information on the success of programs.

Given the sloppy implementation of this act, it's little wonder that by the early eighties Washington was no longer enamored of the new crime-fighting ideas. But a decade later, we've come full circle. There is no question that localities must be tightly involved in implementing a federally initiated crime agenda, but unless the Clinton team is aware of why the grand ideas flopped the last time around, history is destined to repeat itself.

Class act

Of course, the bungling of crime reform may well be the exception. Safe Streets' grand ideas, after all, were being *imposed* on local governments from faraway Washington—a situation sure to inspire distrust no matter how well the regulations were implemented. Perhaps the bulk of the blame in this case really lies with local governments, which were reluctant to accept the fashionable new programs in the first place.

The best way to test that objection is to examine a failed federal reform that was not handed down but was instead inspired by the states themselves—welfare reform.

Clinton's tough campaign rhetoric in this area, such as his promise to "scrap the current welfare system," played no small part in putting him in the White House. While he embraced the foundation of current federal law—forcing welfare recipients to enroll in job training programs—he went a step further, offering a plan that essentially would cancel benefits for those who fail to find a job after two years on assistance. That's no minor suggestion, and one that would require a reprogramming of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC).

Clinton's no-nonsense talk is justified. Public polls show that Americans are not happy with the welfare system, and plenty of policy experts agree. Nearly 5 million families receive AFDC benefits and the average aid recipient is on the rolls for more than six years. The most recent reform, the 1988 Family Support Act, sought to fix that. The sweeping measure, which came after nearly a decade of debate, turned the philosophy behind welfare inside out. Instead of simply providing recipients with money, the law demanded that those receiving aid must in return prepare themselves for a job through training courses, enrolling in college, or the like.

To make the new idea work, the 1988 law, in creating a program known as JOBS, turned much of the implementation responsibility over to the states. The federal government agreed to release more than $3.3 billion over five years in matching funds to state welfare agencies, which would be charged with creating specific programs to provide job counseling and training. The beauty of the 1988 act was that, unlike Safe Streets, many states, such as Arkansas and Massachusetts, had already experimented with so-called "welfare-to-work programs," giving Congress the confidence that it wouldn't be throwing money at a completely untested idea which the states didn't want.

The first round of evaluations of the act are just now filtering in, and while they don't point to a disaster on the scale of Safe Streets, about the brightest face that can be put on it is "mildly successful." In California, for example, welfare recipients who went through a job training program now earn an average of $1,900 a year. Those who did not now earn an average of $1,600. Nationwide, the number of people on welfare in the past four years has gone sharply up—not down. "The hope that states would use JOBS to signal a change in the mission of the welfare system has not been realized," was the conclusion of the largest, and thus far only, in-depth study of the act, *Implementing JOBS*, a review of the welfare-to-work programs in 10 states by Jan Hagan and Irene Lurie of the Rockefeller Institute of Government in Albany, N.Y. The pace of progress has in part prompted Clinton and others to push the more radical reform agenda.

But before we leap into the next welfare overhaul, what exactly has gone wrong with the last one? While some critics of the act argue that the law itself is not tough enough (job training requirements, for example, can be fulfilled through taking self-esteem classes), the larger problem is that the act is "underrated and under-implemented, explains Richard Nathan, whose review of welfare implementation over the past three decades, *Turning Promise into Performance*, is scheduled for publication this spring,

And what does that mean on the front lines? For one, there hasn't been enough money to make it work—partly because the federal government's $3 billion outlay isn't adequate, but also because the states simply have been slow to collect it. (Remember, the federal seed money is not a direct giveaway. In order for each state to receive its share, it must put up matching funds.) Of the $1 billion available to the states in 1991, only $600 million was actually claimed. Of the 10 states studied by Hagan and Lurie, only one, Oregon, even came close to pulling down all the funds to which it was entitled. And often the poorest states, which need the money the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

most, put up the least—and thus pull down the least. Mississippi, for example, drew less than 15 percent of the federal funds to which it was entitled.

In some cases, states facing serious fiscal problems simply haven't been able to make the investment. But in others, it's also a matter of leadership—or lack of it. In fact, in none of the 10 states studied by Hagan and Lurie did welfare agencies make any "organizational changes" in the administration of their programs to incorporate the new federal mandates. Case-workers, for example, were rarely trained for the dramatic shift from distributors of checks to counselors. Instead, in places like Tennessee, county welfare directors were taught how to market the JOBS program, but caseworkers were never trained for the tougher job of educating welfare recipients about where to get the actual job training and education.

In some cases, the failure of leadership is apparent not so much in what state officials do but in what they neglect. Some governors, such as Maryland's William Donald Schaefer and Massachusetts's Mike Dukakis in the eighties, sparked their welfare-to-work programs by holding press conferences to emphasize positive results, pushing for ad campaigns and the like. Others, such as Texas's Bill Clements in the late eighties, sat on their hands. While part of the resistance to push JOBS program in some states may have been due to a lack of funds, some of it was more intentional. "Don't underestimate the politics of it all," said one Texas welfare official, referring to the Clements administration. "They knew they could win political capital by keeping a safe distance from any program that smacked of welfare."

But as with Safe Streets, the implementation vacuum starts in Washington and filters down to the local level. National leadership has made little effort to inspire local welfare agencies to make the new plans work, allowing them to fall back on old ways. In Michigan, says Nathan, "Social workers simply did not believe in the idea of the program. That's what implementation is about, changing the mindset of the people, not just at the top but at the local level." Consider the attitude of welfare bureaucracy in New Jersey. Crucial to the success of the 1988 act, policy planners say, is sanctioning welfare recipients who refuse to take job training courses by withholding part of their welfare checks. But, explains Allan Zalkind, a top welfare administrator in Newark, which has one of the largest welfare populations in the nation, "We oppose the mandatory aspect of the act. We don't like to sanction anyone unless we feel it is absolutely necessary. Our job is not to hold the gun to someone's head."

One fallout from the lack of wallet and will has been that JOBS programs in most every state have been limited to helping only those who volunteer to get job training—in other words, those recipients who actively want to get off welfare. (In some states, like Minnesota, it is official policy to serve only those who voluntarily ask for job training.) That's fine for the volunteers, but it doesn't help much in ultimately lowering the number of people receiving benefits. Those who volunteer for assistance in finding a job are often the most ambitious who, with or without JOBS, would have left the dole after a relatively short period. It's the hard-core cases who are at the heart of America's welfare problem, and JOBS has offered little help in moving them off welfare. "Serving mostly volunteers means we are not reaching into the caseload," explains Judith Geuran, president of Manpower Development Research Corporation, a not-for-profit group that specializes in welfare reform. "The law has potential, but we are a long way from making it work."

The promise land

Making the Family Assistance Act or any law work should be just as high a priority as passing it—for Congress, the White House, and especially the federal agencies. Fortunately, there are road maps for this kind of success, especially on the state level. One is Massachusetts's Employment and Training welfare-to-work program. Here Chet Atkins, who headed the state's welfare agency in the eighties, not only played a hands-on role in creating the policy, but once it was designed, took his show out to the field, working with welfare workers across the state to ensure that the plan was accepted and understood. Atkins realized that before he could change the behavior of those receiving aid, he had to change the attitude of those handing it out.

Recognizing the significance of this missing link in American policy may well be the toughest step. Longtime friend of Bill and Hillary, Marion Wright Edelman, sure to be on the "A list" of White House guests, would do well on one of her visits to leave a copy of a speech she gave six years ago at the Kennedy School of Government's commencement ceremonies. There she spoke of the need for change—but not the kind of policy change most closely associated with Clinton's campaign. "Pay attention," she urged the new graduates, "to the nitty gritty steps of implementation. Passing a law or drafting a regulation is the easiest part of the change process. Making it work, informing the public . . . and getting and training sensitive and skilled personnel to administer it is just as crucial." □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Thinking in Moderation

Progressive, conservative, liberal. Clinton's favorite think tank borrows from everyone

by John J. Dilulio Jr.

Mandate for Change
Will Marshall and Martin Schram, editors. *Berkeley Books,* $11.95.

A student of mine once asked me to distinguish liberals and conservatives from progressives. She was in a big hurry, so I answered half-jokingly as follows: Most thinking people of good will believe that human reason can fashion responses to social maladies such as poverty, crime, and racism. But liberals believe the responses are likely to prove humane and effective. Conservatives believe they are bound to be perverse and futile. And progressives believe that everything would be just fine were it not for the existence of liberals and conservatives. As a corollary, I added that, in thinking about how to solve complex public problems, liberals put governments first, conservatives put markets first, and progressives put themselves first.

The publication of the Progressive Policy Institute's (PPI) *Mandate for Change* marks a watershed in the evolution of the ABLC (Anything But Liberal or Conservative) tradition of policy progressivism. The PPI was founded in 1989 as the policy think-tank of the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), which Bill Clinton chaired from 1990-1991. The preface to *Mandate for Change* proudly notes that Clinton "encouraged PPI's efforts to develop new policies that challenge both liberal and conservative orthodoxies." Clinton's own big-type quote on the front cover (complete with a presidential seal embossed behind it) promises that the book "charts a bold new course for reviving progressive government in America" and "really looks beyond the old Left-Right debates of the past and tries to move us toward a better future."

The new blurber-in-chief is not all wrong. By any measure, *Mandate for Change* is an impressive, illuminating, and wide-ranging book and has many important and novel things to say about the nation's most pressing domestic and international policy challenges. Having gotten off to a rocky start with Zoë Baird, Kimba Wood, gays in the military, and attacks on Social Security benefits, Clinton can still re-read chapter 14 on how to effect a foolproof transition and hit the ground running. The book is required reading for Kempish Republicans who want a good point of intellectual departure for their own DLC-like comeback efforts. And as policy blueprints for new administrations go, PPI is every inch a match for the Heritage Foundation, producer of the now ancient Reagan administration document, *Mandate for Leadership.*

But *Mandate for Change* certainly does not deliver what contributors William A. Galston and Elaine Ciulla Kamarck herald as "an agenda for action that transcends the stale options of the Left and Right." Rather, it is a book that deserves to be taken seriously even though its editors and contributors often substitute rhetorical flights for policy analysis, caricaturing liberal or conservative ideas on one page only to adopt them (albeit with brave new labels) on another.

In the preface, PPI's founder and president Will Marshall and nationally syndicated columnist Martin Schram summarize the "five core themes that define the new progressive politics: opportunity, responsibility, community, democracy, and entrepreneurial government." In a preface to a volume such as this, one expects to find some stirring words and should not be surprised or disappointed if a few of them are overstirred.

But Marshall and Schram go too far. They suggest that both liberals and conservatives are at odds with the belief that "America's strength ultimately resides in our families and communities." Liberals favor government handouts, conservatives favor unfettered markets, but progressives know the value of "voluntary associations and institutions of community—America's 'third sector.'" (Excuse me while I extinguish my thousand points of light.) Responsibility? Liberals favor a "politics of entitlement," conservatives favor a "politics of social neglect," but progres-

John J. DiIulio Jr. is Professor of Politics and Public Affairs at Princeton University, and a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sives favor "reciprocal obligation." Democracy? Liberals are hopeless idealists, conservatives are obsessed with power, but progressives are "realistic" and "tough-minded." And so on.

These are not "core themes" of a "new progressive politics." They are buzzword-hammocks suspended between liberal and conservative strawmen. Let me give it a whirl. Ideology? Liberals often demonize conservatives, conservatives often demonize liberals, but progressives reflexively trivialize both.

Short change

Perhaps the most egregious example of this Goldilocks progressivism is so-called entrepreneurial government. Unlike liberals and conservatives, write Marshall and Schram, progressives "seek innovative, non-bureaucratic ways of governing," including "choice, competition, and market incentives in the public sector." Chapter 12, "Reinventing Government," by PPI Fellow David Osborne, is an attempt to justify this rhetoric.

Unfortunately, the Osborne chapter is little more than a well-packaged list of administrative proverbs. I know that many FOBs, big-name journalists, and the National Governors' Association have embraced Osborne's "reinventing government" schtick. But the only thing he "reinvents" are ideas that have been discussed in dozens of reports on civil service reform dating back to the sixties—contracting out, public-private partnerships, and participative management, to name just a few.

Osborne is pathologically fond of making sweeping generalizations based on success stories drawn from the experiences of a few public agencies and jurisdictions. Where evidence for his management bromides is transparently thin, he resorts to tautologies and a superabundance of slogans (e.g., "emphasize missions and outcomes," "earning rather than spending," "steering rather than rowing.")

In contrast, the book's chapters on the economy are generally well-argued, obviously well-researched, and they come close to justifying the heady claim that progressives have transcended liberal and conservative ideas.

Contributors Robert J. Shapiro and Doug Ross offer a plan for spurring job creation, business investment, state and local capital investment, and U.S. export growth. They argue strongly in favor of massive increases in public spending (whoops, make that massive increases in public "investment") for education, research and development, transportation, and other levers of "wealth-producing activities," and propose that for 12 months "firms should be eligible to receive a tax credit for a significant portion of the first $10,000 in wages paid to new employees." Shapiro recommends dividing the budget into three separate parts (Past, Present, and Future Budgets), "reflecting the different economic impacts of different kinds of spending." He also argues the need for a comprehensive sunset procedure for all government programs plus a line-item veto for the president. And Ross does a superlative job of summarizing ongoing changes in the ways goods and services are produced in the advanced economies.

Unfortunately, Ross sidetracks himself with a wacky proposal for a "new Employment Insurance System" based on "a Career Opportunity Card—a voucher or wallet card" that "would entitle a person to purchase up to $1,200 in education or training" during any five-year period in which he falls on hard times. Ross likens this proposal to the GI Bill, but that's quite a stretch. Try buying what the GI Bill bought with $1,200 in 1993 dollars and you'll see what I mean.

But Ross's proposal points up a broader truth about the book—its ultimate kinship to liberal policy ideas. To be sure, there are parts of *Mandate for Change* that would warm the coldest conservative heart. For example, a chapter by Marshall and Kamarck, "Replacing Welfare with Work," depicts welfare programs as abject failures. "Welfare," they write, "undercuts the incentive to work," "underwrites single parenthood," and "empowers bureaucrats rather than the poor."

For the most part, however, the book errs strongly in favor of liberal approaches. Call it cradle-to-grave progressivism. For example, as a pre-schooler, years before you pick up your $1,200 "Career Opportunity Card," you earn your folks an $800-per-child tax credit and get them time off work for good parental behavior via the Family Leave Bill (see chapter 7). If you grow up to do your community service bit for the "Citizens Corps," you earn $10,000 in vouchers "for college, job training, or housing" (see chapter 6). If you find yourself hooked on drugs, you just report to your local federally-sponsored drug clinic, where you're legally entitled to immediate treatment (see chapter 8). Whenever you need a doctor or a hospital stay, just call your local Health Insurance Purchasing Cooperative (HIPC). But be careful, because HIPCs "only market standardized benefit packages offered by accountable health plans." But accountable, you ask, to whom? Accountable, of course, to the all-new federal health bureaucracy modeled on "the Securities and Exchange Commission" (see chapter 5). And don't worry about the inefficiencies of this new bureaucratic entity because, remember, progressives know how to "reinvent" government even while they're expanding it in every conceivable direction.

Still, *Mandate for Change* borrows creatively

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

from the Left, the Right, and the informed Center. For example, in a chapter on environmental policy, Harvard University's Robert Stavins and former Food and Drug Administration official Thomas Grumbly discuss tradable permit systems and other incentive-based approaches to cutting pollution and costs. They do an able job, for example, of retreading ideas first articulated by Charles L. Schultze, a Brookings economist and Carter-era Council of Economics Advisers chief. Unfortunately, anyone in search of detailed, practical, or strategic advice about precisely what the U.S. should do in the world's trouble spots, from Somalia to Bosnia, will not find it in Marshall's chapter, the only one in the book, I might add, that deals explicitly with international relations, diplomacy, and military force.

At a time when many volumes on public policy play fast-and-loose with the facts, it is no faint praise to say that *Mandate for Change* is relatively free of factual errors or gross distortions of data. There are, however, some exceptions. For example, an otherwise decent discussion of crime by Georgia Director of Intergovernmental Relations Ed Kilgore is marred by a misrepresentation of the statistics on U.S. crime and imprisonment trends and by ignorance of recent empirical findings on gun control. Adjusted to account for relevant demographic and other differences, the United States does not have "by far the highest incarceration rate in the world." Despite the bulge in the nation's prison population, the number of persons imprisoned per 1,000 serious crimes actually decreased between 1981 and 1989. And as much as I support a ban on assault weapons, the best available studies do not make the case that additional gun control measures would cut crime.

By the same token, *Mandate for Change* is remarkably free of the self-contradictions that are common in the what-to-do-next policy genre. Still, there are a few problems. For example, Kilgore's crime chapter lambasts the Reagan and Bush administrations for reducing the federal role in "making streets safer." But in a second Osborne chapter, "A New Federal Compact," criminal justice is listed along with volunteer services and rural development as an area in which "no federal action is justified."

Perhaps the progressives are banking on Osborne's new "Federalism Czar" and the passage of his "American Perestroika Act" (I'm not making this up) to resolve such contradictions. In the meantime, however, this citizen of the Republic would sleep a bit easier if the PPI reprinted and distributed to its progressive true believers copies of James Madison's Federalist, numbers 10, 39, and 51. Madison had a few time-tested thoughts about inter-governmental relations that Osborne and company seem not to know.

Finally, in the book's foreword, "Interpreting the 1992 Election," Schram and the distinguished sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset attempt to find both a personal and a policy mandate for Clinton in the polling data and election returns. To be kind, they doth protest too loudly. I believe that Lipset was among those who in 1981 argued that the country had not decisively moved rightward with Reagan. The data and returns from the 1992 elections, which my Princeton colleague Donald E. Stokes and I have recently analyzed for a forthcoming *Congressional Quarterly* publication, admit of many reasonable interpretations. But even the most well-intentioned squinter cannot find in them the sort of decisive mandate for change that Lipset and Schram find lurking in the numbers on the election of our latest plurality president.

Still, the voters did demand that the economy be improved—and that everything else that's wrong with America be fixed in the bargain, with as little human and financial pain as possible. That is the new president's real mandate. The PPI is to be applauded for daring to help William Jefferson Clinton achieve this mission impossible. Understood as a fervent progressive policy prayerbook, *Mandate for Change* makes inspiring reading. □

NEW IN PAPERBACK

THE VITAL SOUTH

How Presidents Are Elected

EARL BLACK AND MERLE BLACK

"*The Vital South* provides rich documentation of the deep roots the GOP has established in the South...For strategists in both parties and for interested observers on the sidelines, it is **essential reading.**"
—Jonathan Yardley, *Washington Post Book World*

"A **fascinating** and fundamental exposition of the pot of gold at the end of the Southern rainbow and how it got there...The longer historic record of Southern cohesion is awesome and the Blacks tell the story well."
—Martin F. Nolan, *Boston Globe*

26 line illus., 19 maps $14.95

Available at bookstores or from

Harvard University Press

Cambridge, MA 02138 Call toll-free: 1-800-448-2242

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Middle Class Hero

Kevin Phillips knows what ails the middle class, but don't ask him how to cure it

by Nicholas Lemann

Boiling Point: Democrats, Republicans, and the Decline of Middle-Class Prosperity
Kevin Phillips
Random House, $23

Letting his ego out for a trot, Kevin Phillips begins *Boiling Point* by observing that during last year's presidential campaign, Bill Clinton, Ross Perot, Pat Buchanan, Tom Harkin, Mario Cuomo, Jerry Brown, Lloyd Bentsen, Douglas Wilder, and Dick Gephardt all demonstrated that they had either read his last book, *The Politics of Rich and Poor*, "or drawn on its theses." On the other hand, "George Bush and his political advisers chose to ignore the book." Is it any accident that they're unemployed today? But the further implication—woe betide the president who ignores Kevin Phillips—is superfluous, because we now have, for perhaps the first time in our history, a president who can absolutely be counted on to read and assimilate the message of any new book on public affairs that gets even a fraction of the attention that is sure to come to *Boiling Point*. It's inconceivable that President Clinton won't be influenced by this book—which may not be good news.

Nearly everybody in the politics business agrees with Phillips that he deserves to be treated as an oracle. His status is well-earned. As a statistics-wielding young staff member on the 1968 Nixon presidential campaign, and shortly thereafter as the author of *The Emerging Republican Majority*, Phillips identified the most powerful force in national politics during the past quarter-century: Middle-class populism. As opposed to the People's Party populism of the late 19th century, or Huey Longism during the Depression, middle-class populism is not headquartered among the poor and dispossessed, and therefore it can go either way politically. During times of economic prosperity, such as the late sixties, the middle class could be persuaded to direct its resentment toward a cultural elite made up of intellectuals and bureaucrats who sneered at patriotism and other mainstream values and had empathy only for themselves and the minority poor. During times of relative cultural stability and economic trouble, such as the late eighties and early nineties, the middle class would switch to resenting the rich. (That's why Dan Quayle's sallies against the cultural elite didn't work in 1992.)

Thus, depending on its mood, the middle class might vote either Democratic or Republican—the only constant being the enormous potency of the resentment-of-the-elite theme. It was an important bellwether when Phillips, who seems to have a mystical, instinctive oneness with the middle class, announced a switch in his own resentments from cultural to economic in

Nicholas Lemann is a contributing editor of The Washington Monthly.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

1990 with the publication of *The Politics of Rich and Poor*.

If you take what Phillips says as indicative of the political mood, the big news about *Boiling Point* is that the middle-class anger of *The Politics of Rich and Poor,* and of the 1992 campaign, was just a warm-up; now Phillips and the middle class are getting really angry. It must be said that two weeks into the Clinton administration, Phillips seemed to be right on the money. Already there have been two controversies (over Zoë Baird's child care and gays in the military) that revealed the depth of the heartland's simmering rage over the values, lifestyle, and prosperity of the elite, and in both cases Clinton, even though he has spent the last year communing full-time with the people, seemed to have been blindsided by their reaction. Phillips spent the month of January issuing dire warnings that if Clinton included a lot of new taxes on the middle class in his economic plan, all hell could break loose. The wave that swept Bill Clinton into office, in other words, and that he may have hoped would quickly dissipate, may instead continue to gather force all through his term as president.

Tax and offend

The bulk of *Boiling Point* is made up of a long, detailed complaint about the economic condition of the middle class. Phillips does not operate in the manner of a disinterested social scientist testing a hypothesis; rather, he has gathered under one roof what must be every recent study and article that supports his point. The result of this relentless procession of grim news (delivered in Phillips's relentlessly dense and prosecutorial prose) is that you finish *Boiling Point* feeling as if you've been hit over the head with a sledgehammer. Everybody (except perhaps the editorial page of *The Wall Street Journal*) now agrees that in recent years growth in family income has stagnated, that the share of national wealth going to the rich has increased, and that one-parent families and the less educated have been hit the hardest. Phillips gives this situation the emotional freight of the Great Depression.

Tax policy lies at the center of his case. Phillips correctly points out that the net result of the three major pieces of tax legislation of the eighties—the 1981 supply-side income tax cut, the 1983 "rescue" of the Social Security system, and the 1986 simplification of the federal tax code—was that taxes on the rich declined substantially while taxes on the middle class rose. The loss in government revenue caused by the 1981 law was partially offset by increases in other taxes that are more regressive than the federal income tax. They included state and local taxes, user fees, and, most notoriously, the Social Security tax, whose maximum individual assessment rose by 150 percent during the eighties. The increase in the federal deficit also helped the rich, because the government's interest payments are essentially a subsidy to wealthy bondholders. Back in the conservative fifties, Phillips says, median-income families paid less than 10 percent of their earnings to the federal government, but "one profile of Charles Wilson, the chairman of General Motors, estimated that he would have kept only $164,000 from a 1950 salary of $626,000." The top federal income tax rate was 91 percent until 1964; today, it is 31 percent.

Meanwhile, what the middle class gets back from the government has diminished. Such essential services as public education, police, parks, and libraries have suffered severe cutbacks, especially during the recession that's just now ending. Private employers have reduced pensions, health benefits, and, most importantly, the basic security of a job. Inflation and unemployment, Phillips claims, are actually much higher than the official government statistics say they are. The cost of higher education is skyrocketing. A few scattered quotations from *Boiling Point* will convey the overall gestalt: "Much of the great American middle class was losing ground—and knew it"; "Downward mobility was everywhere"; and, "In less than a generation, the average American went from being a political icon to being a fiscal milch cow."

Phillips has obviously been much influenced by Paul Kennedy's book *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, and he places the woes of the middle class in a similar world-historical context of national decline. Phillips appropriates Kennedy's technique of looking for repetitive patterns in the past woes of such countries as Spain and England. But, whereas for Kennedy the key problem was "imperial overstretch," for Phillips it is the excessive prosperity of the rich at the expense of the middle class. National heydays, he says, are always bourgeois in character and always involve a manufacturing-based economy. When "financialization" and "cosmopolitan internationalism" set in, the end is near.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Boiling Point's applicability to elective politics is obvious. Clinton's campaign Svengali, James Carville, and his pollster, Stan Greenberg, are both well-known maestros of the emotions of the middle class, and the basic Clinton campaign mix of promises—middle-class tax relief, better health care, clipping the wings of Washington lobbyists—was entirely consistent with Phillips's message. Kevin Phillips can unquestionably elect—but can he govern? Does a workable program arise out of *Boiling Point*?

Phillips head

The difficulty of answering these questions is that, in a way, there are two Kevin Phillipses at work in the pages of *Boiling Point*. They might be called Heart Phillips and Head Phillips. Heart Phillips came up with the title and has a limitless capacity for middle-class rage. He loves people in "the humdrum middle and lower-middle," with their "parochial interests," and he despises the sophisticated, coast-dwelling, art-collecting, French wine-swilling, mansion-building, fortune-inheriting rich. He can work himself up into an indignant lather not just about big things like layoffs of middle managers, but also about the rising price of concert tickets, basic cable rates, parking garages, and weekly newsmagazines, and about the tendency of employers to cut back on company picnics and leadership development seminars.

His definition of the middle class is extremely generous, taking in perhaps 90 percent of the population; several times he goes out of his way to say that the upper-middle-class (meaning, to use one of his examples, people like orthodontists with six-figure incomes) is troubled, too. Only people with incomes above $1 million are truly ineligible for his sympathy. Heart Phillips doesn't like immigration, free trade, or deficit reduction (devotion to which bespeaks a "green eyeshade" mentality). He doesn't want to scale back on Medicare payments or Social Security benefits for wealthy retirees, and he hated President Bush's 1990 budget agreement.

Head Phillips, on the other hand, realizes that the problems of the middle class as Heart Phillips defines them are impossible to solve. Part of the trouble is that the middle class had such an amazingly good run between 1945 and 1965—its ranks growing, its income rising, its taxes low, its schools and health care improving—that conditions had to level off, especially after the rest of the world began to emerge from the rubble of World War II. Nobody seems to believe (Phillips certainly doesn't) that we can ever reproduce the rapid growth of the 1945–65 period—but the emotions driving Heart Phillips grow out of the expectation that life should always be that way. Head Phillips is the author of the last chapter of *Boiling Point*, which in a responsible, let's-focus-on-the-big-picture tone completely out of sync with the rest of the book, calls for "an agenda of shared sacrifice"; and it was Head Phillips who issued an endorsement of President Clinton's economic plan.

The only clear policy implication of the views of Heart Phillips is that federal taxes on the rich should be raised. Clinton has obviously incorporated this wisdom into his economic plan in the form of his new taxes on millionaires and CEOs—but these are grandstand plays meant to win over the middle class, not major new sources of government revenue. Phillips completely avoids, as Clinton couldn't, the necessity of taxing the middle class in order to salve its other wounds. Even leaving taxes aside, many of the problems *Boiling Point* describes are examples of what might be called middle-class cannibalism: one sub-group of the middle class (such as public employees) feeding on the flesh of another (such as taxpayers). There is plainly no way to alleviate every middle-class grievance while shielding the entire middle class, as Phillips broadly defines it, from any new taxes or other injuries. Eliminate wasteful bureaucracy in the health insurance industry in order to bring rates down, for example, and you've thrown thousands of hard-working claims adjusters out on the street.

Any truly optimistic scenario for the future of the American economy (and therefore of the middle class) involves substantially reducing the deficit and improving the educational system. And yet, it's hard to see how the middle-class beefs that fill *Boiling Point* could be substantially addressed at the same time. Because Phillips's ability to sense the public's mood is nearly unerring, *Boiling Point* gives rise to the question of whether national politics will now merely lurch from one eruption of middle-class anger to the next, with politicians terrified of contemplating anything that might damage the short-term interests of some segment of the middle class—such as the trade agreement with Mexico or a reduction in the growth rate of health costs. It's quite possible to have political gridlock created by public opinion rather than by powerful lobbyists.

The main unanswered question about President Clinton is whether his undeniable political genius is limited to the appearance of sharing the concerns of an amazingly wide range of people, or whether he also has the ability to rally a working majority behind some clear national mission that he defines. If it's the former, then he is going to be presiding over an unstable, frustrated electorate that cannot be successfully appeased. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Tale of Two Elections

Britain's Labour Party has taken heart from Clinton's victory. They shouldn't

by Polly Toynbee

Britain at the Polls 1992
Anthony King, Ivor Crewe, David Denver,
Kenneth Newton, Philip Norton, David Sanders, Patrick Seyd.
Chatham House, $25.

How did it happen? Britain entered the 1992 election in the midst of a long and deepening recession, with virtually every economic indicator plunging. The Chancellor of the Exchequer rashly spoke of glimpses of green shoots of growth, but they were only a mirage in a desert wasteland. The Labour Party, much reformed, was riding high in the polls, though that lead was narrowing sharply as the election approached. The left of the party was vanquished, a spent force, and no one could run a successful red-peril smear campaign against them this time.

Looking back, the political scene in Britain at the time was quite similar to that in the United States around August of 1992. The electoral and the economic cycle was badly out of kilter. So deep was the recession that there was no chance for the government to generate a little spending boom, a mini-miracle. Sweeteners were attempted, but none of them were enough to sway the mortgage-stricken voters, overburdened with high interest debts from the wild-borrowing eighties.

Margaret Thatcher (like Ronald Reagan in this country), though departed, was a ghost at the banquet, her malevolent presence and the remains of her policies still breathing icily down the neck of John Major. The election was his bid to break free, to be his own man. His main asset was that he was not her, and his virtues were the ones she lacked. Emollient by nature, a consensual leader, Major (like Bush) had spoken of wanting a "nation at ease with itself." That seemed to herald an era of calm, of consolidation, and less of that restless reforming zeal, tearing things up by the roots and standing things on their head which characterized his predecessor's reign. Where she brought the sword and flamboyance, his small colorless presence seemed to promise a time of quiet competence and getting on with the dull and technical job of good government.

But Major had trouble with the "vision thing" —his language was impoverished, his vocabulary limited. If he struggled to find an image or a metaphor it was invariably weak and, by the time he'd finished with it, utterly exhausted. His televised interviews were interminably boring, his speeches lackluster. In desperation, his handlers put him on soap boxes in the middle of crowds—Honest John, the man who was at least physically closest to the people. But once on his soap box, he never had a bright or punchy phrase, no sound bite worth the name.

The campaign Major ran was sharply counter to his nice-guy image. Ferocious blasts of negative advertising in the last few weeks hammered home one message, and one alone—Labour would tax the voters more. A curious poster showing two boxing gloves headlined Labour's "Double Whammy" of "More Taxes, Higher Prices." (No one quite knew what the American phrase "Double Whammy" meant, and the words themselves caused a useful controversy.) Another showed munitions labeled "Labour's Tax Bombshell," and a third featured a locust devouring all in its path. There was no positive message about Conservative policies, no message of hope, no boasts about past achievements.

Polly Toynbee is the social affairs editor of the British Broadcasting Corporation.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The strategy worked. Opinion polls showed that by the end of the campaign, half of all voters believed they'd be worse off under Labour. The great issues of the day—Europe, unemployment, and the long-term economy—had been subsumed in a squabble over Labour's hypothetical spending proposals.

That success didn't go unnoticed by the Bush operatives. If the Conservative party could win with such a message in the eye of an economic storm, couldn't the Republicans do likewise? So the Tories sent over advisers to the Bush campaign, and they duly turned out the same low and monotonous theme, but to very different effect.

Labour pains

Why were the results so different? That is the question Labourites are now asking as they sift through the ingredients of the Clinton victory, searching for clues to their own future. Labour suddenly hopes that what happens on one side of the Atlantic can be mirrored on the other next time around.

After each election since 1945, Oxford's Nuffield College has sponsored a study of extraordinary detail. This book is designed as the first of a permanent series to run alongside the Nuffield studies, complementing dry facts with a series of interpretations. Anthony King and Ivor Crewe are among the most serious and interesting of Britain's academic political commentators, and together with others have produced a pen portrait of British politics, from the last election in 1987 to the election of 1992, that is both elegant and illuminating.

One thing this book makes clear is that John Major did almost as much to lose the election as George Bush did to lose his. Major's campaign was low and base, appealing almost exclusively to crude pocketbook instincts. It offered no inspiration, not even a fig leaf of an honorable or exciting reason for voting Conservative. There was no clear program and, after Thatcherism, there was no mission or direction. So why did he win?

YOU CAN HELP

The Washington Monthly is seeking copies of our December 1991 publication for archive purposes. If you have the issue and are willing to part with it, please send it to our publisher, Mary Beiro, at

The Washington Monthly,
1611 Connecticut Ave. N.W.
Washington D.C. 20009.

Partly because Neil Kinnock was no Bill Clinton. Wary about Kinnock's second outing, his strategists kept him on a tight leash. It was a campaign which Labour hoped to win by default if they made no mistakes. They thought neat suits, respectable policies, promises to spend no more than they could earn in growth, and only raising taxes for a small top income group would cause the recession election to fall to them. They too had no vision, no message. Where Clinton's carefully crafted package of welfare proposals looked tough, yet tender and innovative, Labour's looked like warmed-over and watered-down remnants of past policies. Clinton won his election, and Kinnock lost his while Bush and Major fought almost identical campaigns.

But the chasm between British and American politics is so colossal that crude comparisons are almost meaningless. Clintonism has become a code word in Britain for a number of reforms the Labour radicals support, but Labour's interpretation of Clinton is probably about as close to the actual man and his politics as the Church of England's idea of Jesus is to the historical Christ. The policy advocated by Labour's Clintonites is electoral and constitutional reform of a system groaning with institutional corruption and decrepitude. Clintonism has also become a code word for those who wish they hadn't elected the staid John Smith as leader, but had skipped a generation and opted for the young, bright, radical, and far more interesting Tony Blair.

The British experience over recent elections leads many to suppose that no one can win an election now if they look as though they might tax anyone any more, even the top few highest earners.

But does the Clinton experience suggest that this need be an iron rule? Is it possible, some in the Labour Party are asking, that a powerful leader with a coherent and attractive vision and a sense of mission can overwhelm a negative campaign from the opposition and win, even when spending plans may mean higher taxes in the end? Or did Bush lose on that very issue, with the voters never forgiving him after reading his lying lips? The British Conservative party has cut income taxes consistently. The only economic success of the last decade that is left intact is that commitment. John Major is now under intense pressure to raise income taxes to ease the debt burden. But shuddering as he looks at the fate of George Bush, few think he will dare.

These transatlantic comparisons are all voodoo politics, each side drawing what hope and comfort they choose from systems and nations too radically different to make much sense. But for those who wish to study British politics for their own sake, this book is comprehensive, intelligent, and readable. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

POLITICAL BOOKNOTES

Tales Out of School
Joseph Fernandez
Little, Brown, $24.95

The media devoted most if its page-one stories about the memoirs of Joe Fernandez, the ex-chancellor of education for the New York City school system, to the juicy tidbits that sell newspapers: The revelation that Fernandez nearly overdosed 40 years ago as a teenager and his political snub of Mario Cuomo. The soap opera was revived in early February when the school board ousted Fernandez after feuding with the chancellor over his stands on gay rights and condom distribution. But the most significant story about Fernandez was still ignored by the press: He had, through his memoirs, offered the public its first hard tour inside the beleaguered New York City school system.

Here Fernandez provides lessons on why janitors in New York City are paid $58,000 annually but don't do windows. Or why the Board of Education can't fire principals with tenure no matter how badly they screw up. The real scandal, as Fernandez aptly demonstrates in his book, occurs silently every day.

The story begins with Fernandez as a troubled teenager in Harlem. A nearly fatal drug overdose at age 18 convinced him to change course and join the Air Force, leading to his college degree at age 27. His early story drifts between seminal moments and the obligatory nostalgia better stored in a diary. But it was as a math teacher in Florida's Dade County that his philosophy on education really began to take shape—a philosophy that centered on parental and teacher involvement in each school's decision-making process. Why not involve those who battle with the system the most—and who understand its problems the best? "My feeling was that you gain more by bringing people in than by trying to keep them out," Fernandez writes.

From this he derived a solution to education bureaucracy called "School-based Management," which he implemented with some success in Dade County as superintendent in the late eighties. The concept is both simple and elegant: Have each school run by a cadre of parents, teachers, and the principal, all working to set school policies in areas from budget to curriculum to personnel. Eliminate needless middle-men who waste resources in their fights for territory between the school and the school board. Finally, create a system of performance feedback so that the effectiveness of strategy introduced at the top can be judged by results rather than politics.

The organizational theory of creative, proactive involvement at all levels is not new. The great statistics guru W. Edwards Deming first pro-

UNEQUAL JUSTICE
A Question of Color
Coramae Richey Mann

"Mann has produced an illuminating, thoroughly researched, and comprehensive treatment of the experiences of minorities in the criminal justice system. The book dispassionately provides persuasive evidence of the disparate treatment of African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, and Asian Americans in the criminal justice system. . . . *Unequal Justice* underscores the urgent need to find a way to promote justice in our legal system today."
—Mary Frances Berry, Member U.S. Commission on Civil Rights

Synthesizing research on race and crime through cross-cultural analyses, this monumental study reveals that peoples of color do not receive equal treatment in the U.S. criminal justice system and that this inequality is intimately related to their skin color.
Blacks in the Diaspora

cloth $35.00 paper $14.95

At bookstores or from
INDIANA UNIVERSITY PRESS
601 N. Morton St.
Bloomington, IN 47404
Orders: 1-800-842-6796

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

posed these ideas to a ravaged, dispirited Japan in the fifties, a time when U.S. auto manufacturers poo-pooed the importance of customers and employees. Today, the Japanese consider Deming a national hero—and sell some of the best cars in America.

Can education be handled the same way? Fernandez found that with 32 districts, each with its own superintendent and school board, New York "had tyranny of local dominions . . . So going in, I made up my mind I would attack bad governance whenever and wherever I saw it, and if it meant finding out exactly how much clout the chancellor had for what he needed to do, all the better." Thus, he added to his theory of proactive involvement the need for a strong, centralized backer (himself) to defend reform against the entity which has the most to lose from reform—the bureaucracy of the system itself.

Though he can try, one chancellor can't enforce accountability on a system as mammoth as New York's (more than 120,000 employees, 1 million students, and a budget of $7 billion a year). Fernandez was able to build a coalition of editorial boards and public support on the outside but seemed to get trapped in the politics of blame on the inside. He spends much of the remainder of the book delving into the play-by-play nuances of his original salary negotiations and subsequent personality conflicts with the city's school board, along with explanations of why he wasn't after New York Mayor David Dinkins's job or why the city provided him with an expensive brownstone in Brooklyn. All this would be boring except that it reveals how the reformer can become a prisoner of his own office.

"The truth is that in a job like this you reach a point where it's time to move on anyway. You begin to sense it when conflicts start going off in series, like exploding firecrackers," he says with acrimonious prescience. No one can handle a system that large. School districts in New York, and the nation, for that matter, need to be broken down into manageable independent entities run by competent reformers—rather than one gung-ho chancellor trying to move a glacier, or one secretary of Education with a strategy and no fiscal clout—for Fernandez's system of school-based management to have the support and accountability it requires.

—Brendan Foley

Summer Internships

The Washington Monthly is accepting applications for summer 1993 interns. From circulation, production, and advertising, to writing, editing, and researching, *Monthly* interns gain experience in all aspects of magazine publishing.

If interested, send your résumé, two recommendations, writing samples (articles, term papers, etc.), and a cover letter specifying the dates you will be available, by April 1 to:

Summer Interships
The Washington Monthly
1611 Connecticut Ave. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20009

Strom Thurmond and the Politics of Southern Change.
Nadine Cohodas.
Simon & Schuster, $27.50.

Strom Thurmond is one of the great ideological losers in post-war American politics. At every essential juncture in the forties, fifties, and sixties, the veteran senator from South Carolina came down hard on the wrong side of history. He fought even the mildest of civil rights measures, employed demagogic rhetoric, and cloaked calls for a white-dominated Southern culture in the code of states' rights. Worse, Thurmond's moral vision appeared so narrow that he professed not to understand how Jim Crow hurt blacks.

Nadine Cohodas, a former reporter for *Congressional Quarterly*, has written a balanced, fair, comprehensive, and useful account of Thurmond's lengthy public life. She rightly sees Thurmond's political career and life—for Thurmond, the two are indistinguishable—as the struggle of a man of great political talent but little vision to cope with the shifting dynamics of race in the 20th century.

Thurmond was born in 1902, the son of a prosperous lawyer and farmer in the town of Edgefield. His father, John William Thurmond, became a state senator and ally of "Pitchfork" Ben Tillman, the charismatic, viciously racist South Carolina governor and senator whom six-year-old Strom met and idolized.

In a straightforward narrative style, Cohodas dutifully tracks Thurmond through his student years at Clemson University, his career as a school teacher, and his first campaign, a race for county school superintendent in 1926. Cohodas then moves on to Thurmond's run for the state Senate, his state judgeship, his heroic service in World War II, and his election as governor in 1946.

Thurmond emerged on the national stage in 1948, when Southern Democrats rebelled after President Truman insisted on including civil rights planks in the party's platform. Thurmond didn't lead the Southern revolt at first, but after several state delegations bolted from the party's Philadelphia convention, the South Carolina governor seized the banner of the States' Rights Party and carried it with gusto. The 1948 break was the first in the long series of political shifts that, 20 years later, would produce the solid Republican South after a century of Democratic dominance in the region.

Thurmond's 1948 segregationist campaign fell flat. He picked up just 3 percent of the nation's popular vote but did carry four states in the old Confederacy. His rhetoric was affecting and fearful, springing from the deep well of South Carolina's historic resistance to national efforts to liberate blacks. "All the laws of Washington and all the bayonets of the army cannot force the Negro into our homes, our schools, our churches, and our places of recreation," Thurmond thundered, over and over again.

After the failed presidential bid, Thurmond won a 1954 write-in election to the U.S. Senate seat he's held ever since. Throughout the fifties and sixties, Thurmond fought civil rights bills with a venom and singularity of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

purpose unmatched by any other senator. He was utterly unmoved by the eloquent pleas of Martin Luther King Jr. and Thurgood Marshall, and his rhetoric and militant defense of segregation remained untempered by the changes afoot. Thurmond labeled *Brown* v. *Board of Education* "the outstanding judicial blunder of all time;" and in 1962, when a court ordered Clemson to admit Harvey Gantt as its first black student, the senator explicitly opposed it. In 1965, when the Senate overwhelmingly passed the landmark Civil Rights Act, Thurmond declared, "This is a tragic day for America."

In 1964, repulsed by the Kennedy and Johnson administrations' civil rights advocacy, Thurmond bolted from the Democratic party again and committed what was, at the time, a heretical act for a Southerner: He became a Republican. In a way, Thurmond became the first Reagan Democrat, and, Cohodas argues, helped pave the way for future Republican candidates to win in the South.

Cohodas doggedly traces the highlights and low lights of Thurmond's career, and skillfully laces the narrative with vignettes and details from the history of South Carolina, the South, and the civil rights movement.

Thurmond, no matter what you think of his politics, has had a hell of a ride. His 38-year career is one of the longest in the history of the Senate. (And in 1968, at the tender age of 66, he married a beauty queen more than 40 years his junior.) But longevity without purpose is meaningless. Thurmond won't be remembered for the legislation he passed, but for the legislation that passed over his frenetic objections. In fact, Thurmond still holds the record for the longest filibuster in Senate history. It was no Mr. Smith-like rage against corruption; rather, he took up an entire day of the Senate's time in 1957 fulminating against a mild civil rights bill.

Despite his undeniable public record, Thurmond says with a straight face, "Well, honestly in my heart, I've never been a racist." Occasionally, Cohodas seems too willing to take such quotations at face value. She doesn't dig deeply enough past the politician to expose the man's psyche. We know that Strom Thurmond now has a black secretary and that some blacks in South Carolina vote for him. That's hardly a reconciliation. How has the Senator worked out the nettlesome question of race in his own life, in his own mind and heart? How has he reconciled his past actions and statements with the history that has unfolded before his eyes?

Cohodas rightly takes pains to place Thurmond in his proper context. He was but one of a gaggle of Southern politicians who defended segregation to its death. But there were Southerners brave enough to see the future and not shrink from it: Lyndon Johnson, Albert Gore Sr., and Ernest Hollings come immediately to mind. Especially instructive is Cohodas's comparison of Thurmond with Waties Waring, an older South Carolinian cut from the same genetic cloth as Thurmond. As a federal judge in South Carolina, Waring made a series of revolutionary rulings in the forties that helped put Jim Crow to rout.

Where men like Waring looked forward, Thurmond looked backwards, always backwards. He came into the political world with all the baggage of a segregationist South and clung to it as long as he could.

—*Daniel Gross*

Before he arrived, this Brooklyn neighborhood didn't have a prayer.

UPON THIS ROCK

The acclaimed author of *Small Victories* takes you into the soul of a Brooklyn ghetto church and into the heart of its activist minister. *Upon This Rock* offers a powerful vision of one community's resistance to the despair and fear that shadow so much of urban America.

"Vividly captures the story of a man and a people who are transforming lives and communities."—The Reverend Jesse Jackson

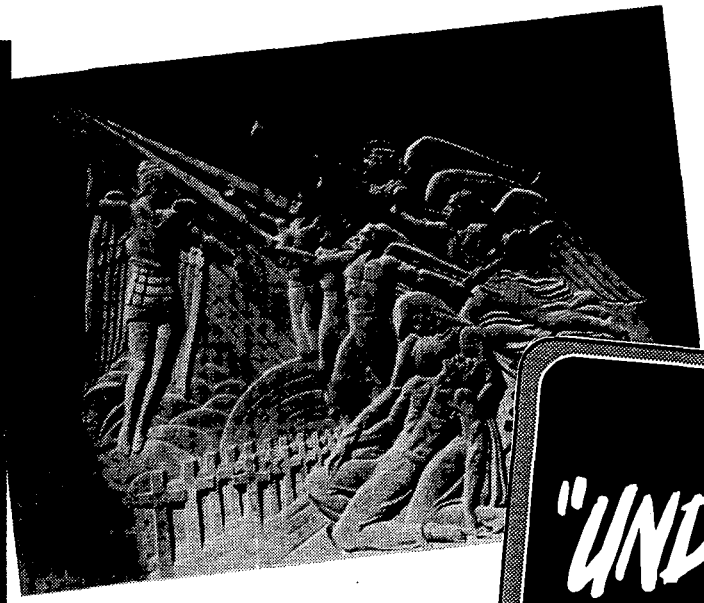
"A wonderfully uplifting, beautifully written, touchingly intimate portrait."—David J. Garrow, Pulitzer Prize winner for *Bearing the Cross*

"A deeply stirring performance....It is among the books that one most hopes President Clinton will find time to read for its testimony about what can be accomplished through the power of vision, by the light of hope, with inexhaustible integrity and sheer blessed determination."—*New York Times*

A Selection of the Book-of-the- Month Club

HarperCollins*Publishers* *Also available from* HarperCollins*Canada Ltd.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



The "UNDERCLASS" Debate

Enclaves of America

The Rhetoric of American Political Architecture Abroad, 1900-1965

Ron Robin

Whether determining the style of its embassies or the design of overseas cemeteries for Americans killed in battle, the U.S. government has greatly valued architectural symbols as a way of conveying its power abroad. To explain the political significance of American monuments on foreign soil, this illustrated book explores the efforts made by the United States to enhance its image as a military and economic force with displays of artistic achievement.

"In my readings on foreign relations, I have never encountered anything as filled with fascinating new data and insights as this. It is truly a *tour de force*, a brilliant new interpretation of America's ascent to international power status."

—Akira Iriye, Harvard University

Cloth: $24.95 ISBN 0-691-04805-3

The "Underclass" Debate

Views from History

Edited by Michael B. Katz

Do ominous reports of an emerging "underclass" reveal an unprecedented crisis in American society or are social commentators simply rediscovering the tragedy of recurring urban poverty? By providing a badly needed historical context, the contributors to this provocative new book focus not on individual and family behavior but on a complex set of processes that have been at work over a long period, degrading the inner cities and the nation as a whole.

"*The 'Underclass' Debate* adds a critical new dimension to contemporary research on poverty in America. . . . The essays offer important insights into how the development of urban politics and institutions affected the lives of the poor. . . ."

—Margaret Weir, The Brookings Institute

Paper: $16.95 ISBN 0-691-00628-8
Cloth: $59.50 ISBN 0-691-04810-X

Princeton University Press

ORDERS: 800-777-4726 • OR FROM YOUR LOCAL BOOKSTORE

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED